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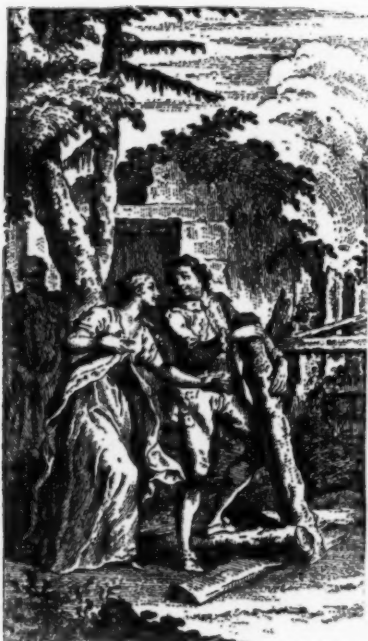
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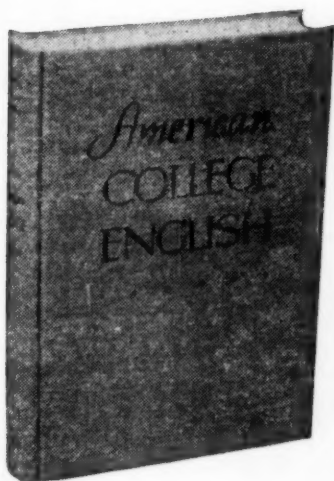
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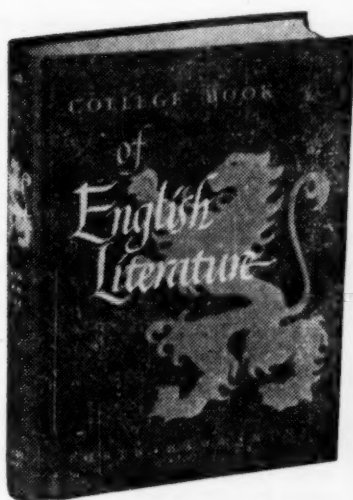
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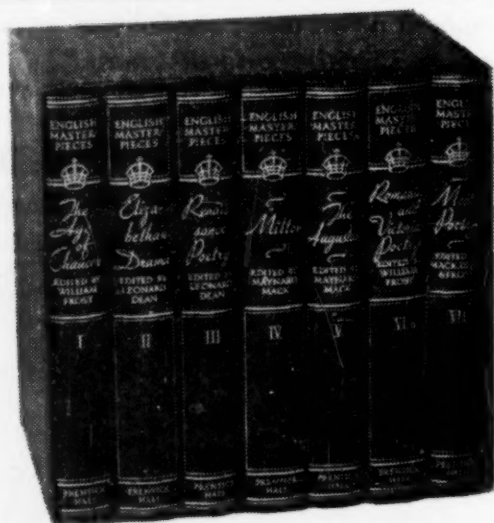
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COLLEGE ENGLISH

Volume 12

OCTOBER 1950

Number 1

Graham Greene: A Pioneer Novelist¹

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE²

O ye that stand upon the brink,
Whom I so near me through the chink
With wonder see: What faces there,
Whose feet, whose bodies, do ye wear?
I my companions see
In you, another me.
They seem'd others, but are we;
Our second selves those shadows be.

THOMAS TRAHERNE

I

IN THE work of Graham Green no sharp divisions can be drawn between his novels, entertainments, and travel books. Throughout them all, in some form or other, runs the theme of pursuit. In his first novel, *The Man Within* (1929), the predicament is stated in clear-cut terms: "A sense of overwhelming desolation passed over him, a wonder whether he would ever know peace from pursuit. . . ." Andrews has betrayed his fellow-smugglers to the excisemen; he shelters in a girl's house, and she persuades him to turn king's evidence; he does so—

¹ An article secured through the English Association (British) in exchange for a paper on Ezra Pound by Robert Hume, of the University of Nevada, sent by the National Council of Teachers of English for publication in the British magazine *English*.

² Editor of the British literary quarterly *The Wind and the Rain*.

partly because he is in love with her and partly because he wishes to assert his own authority. For his loyalties are divided. His life has been a series of alternations between his higher and lower natures, between his spirit and the flesh. In the words of Sir Thomas Browne: "There's another man within me that's angry with me"; and it is this duality in man's nature with which Greene is primarily concerned. For him the pursuit is always on: it is both down the arches of the years as well as down the labyrinthine ways of each man's mind. He is essentially what may be described as a "pioneer novelist."

A pioneer novelist is an author who gives the reader a newer and deeper understanding of reality; his aim is not so much "to present a slice of life" as to present the reader with a fresher and

profounder awareness of the possibilities of life. Dostoevski was one such novelist, Melville another. It is Greene's misfortune that he has been dubbed by the press a Catholic novelist, since by the same principle one might describe *Robinson Crusoe* as a Nonconformist novel and Sterne as an Anglican novelist; nothing could be less appropriate. Graham Greene is a novelist; he is also a Roman Catholic, and what matters ultimately is whether his books are works of art or not. Considerations of race and creed are beside the point, just as they are beside the point when one comes to evaluate *Crime and Punishment* and *Moby-Dick*. This is not to imply that Greene's conversion to the Catholic church has not affected his work, because it is obvious that it has; but in his later work his conversion has become as integrated a part of his general experience as were the four years which he spent on the staff of *The Times*. Catholicism is not a creed, but a way of life; and it is in such terms (though not always successfully) that he has attempted to interpret it in his books.

After *The Man Within*, there followed *The Name of Action* (1930) and *Rumour at Nightfall* (1931), both of which were subsequently suppressed by the author. Taken together, these first three novels are all in the tradition of the historical adventure story: "European Westerns," one might call them. They are wordy and, for the most part, undistinguished. It was not until *Stamboul Train* (1932) that Greene came into his own as a writer. The years of his apprenticeship were over; excursions into the past were set aside: he would write of the contemporary scene in future.

II

Stamboul Train "was written hurriedly because one had desperately

wanted the money." Ostensibly the book is a thriller, but there are passages which raise it to a level of another kind: as one reads on, one becomes aware that the book is an allegory presented in the form of a thriller, a study of compassion when it becomes corrupted and is transformed into self-pity.

Watching [Coral Musker] dance upon the stage, or stand in a lit street outside a stage door, [Myatt] would have regarded her only as game for the senses, but helpless and sick under the dim unsteady lamp of the corridor, her body shaken by the speed of the train, she woke a painful pity. She had not complained of the cold; she had commented on it as a kind of necessary evil, and in a flash of insight he became aware of the innumerable necessary evils of which life for her was made up.

This scene bears contrasting with a similar scene that occurs in Greene's travel book, *Journey without Maps* (1936):

... the girl in the Queen's Bar. I met her weeping across Leicester Square when the leaves had dropped and made the pavements slippery, she went into the vestibule of the Empire Cinema and verged violently away again (that wouldn't do), settled at last on a high chair in the Queen's Bar, made up her face, had a gin and tonic; I hadn't the nerve to say anything and find out the details. Besides, it's always happening all the time everywhere. You don't weep unless you've been happy first; tears always mean something enviable.

In the first scene Greene is writing as a novelist; he is expounding the reaction of a certain character to a certain event. In the second scene he is writing as himself; he is recording his own reaction to a certain incident and at the same time giving the reader not only a glimpse of his own philosophy of life but also of the kind of raw material which a novelist stores. In both cases it is the inner conflict with which the author is concerned. For the two scenes are but reflections of the struggles which go on endlessly in

every heart and mind—reflections of those shadows which Traherne christened “our second selves.” Indeed, apropos of Greene’s exposure of the vice of pity as the corrupt parody of love, W. H. Auden has observed that “we like reading [his] thrillers because each of us is a creature at war with himself,” going on to add that man is often a self-deceptive creature who thinks he is feeling one thing or acting from one motive when his real feeling and motive are different.³ This is the point about Myatt in *Stamboul Train*. To him, Coral Musker is a dancing girl who is “game for the senses”: what sorrow he feels for her is motivated by purely selfish ends. He feels ill at ease at being forced to contemplate her sordid existence. Unlike the observer (i.e., Greene) of “the girl in the Queen’s Bar,” there is nothing enviable about Myatt’s sorrow: his tears are crocodile tears.

In a later book, *The Ministry of Fear* (1943), one finds a fusion taking place between the two attitudes: the implied judgement becomes an integral part of the writing; the novelist and the journalist become one and the same person. Arthur Rowe kills his wife because she is suffering from an incurable disease. Accidentally he becomes involved with a ring of enemy agents, and it is when he comes face to face with Hilfe, the Fascist spy, that he realizes that “it was her endurance and her patience which he found most unbearable”; that “he was trying to escape his own pain, not hers”; that, in pitying her, he had looked down upon her. It was the doctrine of the superman, and, like the Fascist Hilfe, he was also a murderer: society might call it mercy-killing, but, for all that, it was murder caused by self-pity. He had abused the virtue of compassion.

³ See *The Wind and the Rain* (summer, 1949), p. 53.

Now it is precisely this added psychological penetration of situations which differentiates Greene’s work from that of most of his contemporaries, giving it another dimension. For instance, in *It’s a Battlefield* (1934) outwardly the conflict would seem one between authority and anarchy. Conrad Drover, the brother of a Communist bus-driver, shoots a policeman during a political riot; he is sentenced to death, and the greater part of the book is concerned with whether the Home Secretary will grant him a reprieve or not. The fact that, in the end, such a reprieve is granted is really beside the point, because what Greene is out to show is how in the England of the thirties there was a continuous battle taking place; everywhere there existed pockets of resistance, but nowhere was there any united action. At the time of the book’s original publication, the epigraph from Kingslake which prefaced it had a specially topical note: “To the bare eyesight of men, the battlefield had no entirety, no length, no breadth, no depth, no size, no shape. . . . Each separate gathering of English soldiery went on fighting its own little battle in happy and advantageous ignorance of the general state of the action. . . .” Signs of the battle might be apparent here and there to the casual observer, but the real battle lay with “the man within”; lay with the conscience of each of the many participants in the battle which, analyzed, as Greene attempted to analyze it, was a battle between material and spiritual values. In the seemingly chaotic picture which the book portrays, one is reminded of Newman’s comment which Greene has quoted elsewhere: “. . . if there be a God, *since* there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity.” On the surface in *It’s a Battlefield*, everything appears

chance. (English soldiery was "very often in ignorance of the fact that any great conflict was raging.") For example, here is Mrs. Drover's petition being discussed:

"Ah, but you can't tell. Once in fifty times it has an effect. The Minister picks up the papers and sees a name he knows. It may be only the name and not the man at all, but it makes him look again and think a bit. Or he's just spoken to a big meeting and been cheered, and then he feels democratic and that the people know best. Or he's had a good dinner. Perhaps he's drunk too much. Perhaps he's the one minister in twenty years who drinks too much. But it makes the difference. You can't tell. You've got to try. None of us knows what motives they may have for hanging Drover or for reprimanding him. Politics and religion are all mixed up in it."

Yet behind the chance there is a design: that is the paradox of life for any Christian, and it is the paradox of Greene's novels. The issues at stake in the case of Drover are not simple; they are not issues which can be decided purely by legislation, for even legislation at times is fallible ("Perhaps he's drunk too much"). Greene is developing in his own particularly personal way what Conrad had already stated in his novel *The Secret Agent*:

He no longer considered it eminently desirable all round to establish publicly the identity of the man who had blown himself up that morning with such horrible completeness. But he was not certain what view the department would take. A department is to those it employs a complex personality with ideas and fads of its own. It depends on the loyal devotion of its servants, and the devoted loyalty of trusted servants is associated with a certain amount of affectionate contempt, which keeps it sweet, as it were. . . . Likewise no department appears perfectly wise to the intimacy of its workers. A department does not know so much as some of its servants. Being a dispassionate organism, it can never be perfectly informed. It would not be good for its efficiency to know too much. Chief Inspector Heat got out of the train in a state of thoughtfulness entirely untainted with

disloyalty, but not quite free of that jealous mistrust which so often springs on the ground of perfect devotion, whether to women or to institutions.

Conrad's matter for his story, like that of Greene's in *It's a Battlefield* and *A Gun for Sale* (1936), is that of a thriller—murder, suicide, hidden bombs, terrorist conclaves, and embassy machinations. Yet there is this difference between Conrad and Greene. The strength of Conrad's work lies largely in the interplay of contrasting psychological motives and, to a lesser extent, of contrasting moral perspectives; of setting one man's ideas and thoughts at odds with those of another. No real attempt is made to resolve these conflicts, but merely to state them; to make the reader fully aware of the complexity of the situation. With Greene, in his work of the last twelve years, the process is carried a stage further. In terms of eternity he attempts to resolve the conflicts which are set up within his characters; to show the significance of their complexity in a universal design. Pursuit becomes a way to salvation.

III

Brighton Rock (1938), *The Power and the Glory* (1940), and *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) are Greene's three major achievements: his other books, by comparison, are mere stepping-stones. Yet *Brighton Rock* cannot be accounted a complete success: in its treatment of the boy gangster and his girl it is too cinematic to be fully convincing, too much a case "of the romantic gunman and his moll." On the other hand, there are passages of great power in the book, and it may be worth pausing to examine one of these in detail. It is a scene in which Pinkie, the boy gangster, is fleeing from his pursuers:

He heard a whisper, looked sharply round and thrust the paper back. In an alley between two shops, an old woman sat upon the ground: he could just see the rotting and discoloured face: it was like the sight of damnation. Then he heard the whisper: "Blessed art thou among women," saw the grey fingers fumbling at the beads. This was not one of the damned: he watched with horrified fascination: this was one of the saved.

If one allows for the starkness of the writing, for the somewhat clichéd phrase, "horrified fascination," one must admit that, so far as English literature is concerned, this is writing in a new *genre*. For Pinkie's attitude to the old woman is neither wholly scornful nor wholly cynical: instead, it is the typical attitude of a lapsed Catholic who is aware that he is letting salvation slip through his fingers—and by his own choosing. In the extract quoted, neither Pinkie in his thoughts on life and death nor Greene in his portrayal of Pinkie falls a victim to the doctrine of predestination. The reader is merely made a witness of a dilemma which is common to a lapsed Catholic. Further, it is a feeling which evokes in the reader's heart a quite different response from that which Greene evoked two years earlier in *A Gun for Sale*. Take, for example, this passage in the latter book, where Mather has cornered Raven: it is the end of the chase:

Mather watched them with an odd sense of shame, as if he were a spy. The thin limping shadow became a human being who knew the girl he loved. There was a kind of relationship between them. He thought: How many years will he get for that robbery? He wanted no longer to shoot. He thought: poor devil, he must be pretty driven by now, he's probably looking for a place to sit down in. . . .

Here again the reader is a witness, but a witness of an essentially human rather than spiritual conflict: no religious dilemma is implied, although there are several similarities in character between

Raven and Pinkie. For Raven is, as it were, a first draft for Pinkie, who, in turn (it would seem), was Greene's first draft for the later *Scobie*. Yet, whereas Raven is merely a "killer hired by armament manufacturers, Pinkie is his own employer; his allegiance is to none save himself. Therefore, when he murders, when he plans to blind with vitriol the girl who has followed him through thick and thin, he is making a choice of his own free will. It is as if he deliberately chooses damnation. Of course, Greene makes no such direct judgement on Pinkie, although it is a weakness of the book that there is a tendency for him to allow the characters to become archetypes of good and evil, right and wrong. If Pinkie and his girl Rose stand for good and evil, Ida, the cockney down from London, and her friend the detective stand for right and wrong: one feels that they are untroubled by sin, being interested only in "the straight deal" and justice. They stand for law and order—that law and order of which the police are custodians. On the other hand, Pinkie and Rose see their actions as leading to either heaven or hell, salvation or damnation: they know that, even if they escape the police, they cannot escape God. As Pinkie says, "*Credo in unum Satanum*"; and both he and Rose have an awareness of sin which neither Ida nor her friend the detective knows. As Greene has said elsewhere, one might say of Pinkie and Rose that hell lay about them in their infancy. This division appears inevitable in the construction of the plot, but its inevitability leads to a certain falsification in the book as a work of art:⁴ it makes for a form of Catholic discrimination amongst the various characters. The result is

⁴ See Helen Gardner's study of François Mauriac in *Penguin, New Writing*, No. 31 (1947).

that, despite finely contrived scenes, something of a partisan spirit is apparent in the novel; and with this religious partisanship goes an element of priggishness. Both these temptations Greene resisted in *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*.

On the eve of the second World War, Greene published his second travel book, *The Lawless Roads*: it both looks back to *Brighton Rock* and anticipates *The Power and the Glory*. It can be read as a novelist's notebook. In it there is a passage which recalls Pinkie being pursued, because the style in which it is written is identical, it is merely a variation in technique:

The fanged mestizo slipped away—reading out the President's message—all the blarney and the evil will of Mexican townsmen, the decaying church, the vultures, the rubble in Villahermosa, "we die like dogs"; all that was left was an old man on the edge of starvation living in a hut with the rats, welcoming the strangers without a word of payment, gossiping gently in the dark—I felt myself back with the population of heaven.

"This was one of the saved"; "I felt myself back with the population of heaven."

Direct statements like these—the first from a novel, the second from a travel book—seldom succeed in fiction, although Greene is a writer who constantly transposes sentiments and comments expressed in his autobiographical work to his fiction. It is a habit fraught with dangers for the novelist, but a method for which Greene has fashioned his own simple technique. It is the adaptation of the dramatic soliloquy to the confines of the novel: in the process, histrionics are abandoned, so that one has the impression not of somebody declaiming his thoughts to the world at large but of somebody whispering his inmost doubts and conflicts to one by telephone.⁵ The manner is well suited to

an author whose characters are continually being pulled back by the twitch of conscience. But to hark back to *The Lawless Roads*:

"Oh," he said, "he was just what we call a whisky priest." He, Garrido, had taken one of his sons to be baptized, but the priest was drunk and would insist on naming him Brigitta. He was little loss, poor man, a kind of Padre Rey; but who can judge what terror and hardship and isolation may have excused him in the eyes of God?

Herein is to be found the gist of *The Power and the Glory*: it is a study of a whisky priest. In Mexico during a period of persecution, one priest remains; he is a coward, sodden with drink, the father of an illegitimate daughter. But, for all that, he remains a priest, ministering to the needs of his flock. As he lies in his cell on the last morning of his life, he thinks back over his wasted vocation; shortly he will be executed:

Tears streamed down his face: he was not at the moment afraid of damnation—even the fear of pain was in the background. He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all. It seemed to him, at that moment, that it would have been quite easy to have been a saint. He felt like someone who has missed happiness by seconds at an appointed place. He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted—to be a saint.

One is reminded of the last sentence in Léon Bloy's novel *La Femme pauvre*: "she knew at the end there was only

⁵ A small aside on Greene as a dramatic critic may be apt here. On and off, Greene has been writing theatre criticism for the last twenty years. In 1942 he published a short study of *British Dramatists*, and in his comments upon the Elizabethan drama he stated that he believed Marlowe's achievement was greatly overrated. One suspects that this censure is somewhat conditioned by the fact that Marlowe's plays lack spiritual depth: the motive of an inner conflict is scarcely ever made apparent. *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* is largely a play of lost opportunities, saved from oblivion by one or two peak moments.

one unhappiness, and that is—NOT TO BE ONE OF THE SAINTS." Indeed, Greene's recent works bear many similarities to those of François Mauriac and George Bernanos; but, whereas their works right from the beginning have been concerned with presenting the Catholic point of view in situations as they affect Catholics, this narrowing-down to specifically Catholic situations is a late development in Greene. Again the phrase "Catholic situations" must be used advisedly. In *The Power and the Glory* the conflict of the priest and his flock with the police lieutenant and the supporters of secularism is the age-long conflict between church and state: in fact, together with the inner conflict set up within the priest's mind, it transcends any narrow or specifically Catholic issue, for the real issue at stake (religious independence versus totalitarian deomiance) has a universal meaning. As Walter Allen noted during the second World War, the book mirrors man's universal struggle, "which today [1943-44] is being waged conspicuously by clergymen and school teachers in Norway against the Gestapo, by the Jews of Warsaw, by Greek guerrillas and French saboteurs."⁶ This is the crucial factor. The vision behind the book is much wider and deeper than that of *Brighton Rock* because both good and evil are seen commingled in the central character: the priest is, first and foremost, not a vehicle used by the author for expressing a rigid set of ideas but a man of flesh and blood—with all those weaknesses which flesh and blood are heir to. So it is that to follow his last few haunted hours is to undergo a living experience, to have a profounder awareness of the possibilities of life.

⁶ See *Writers of Today*, ed. Denys Val Baker, p. 27.

A similar experience attends the reader of *The Heart of the Matter*. His study of Scobie (the book's central character) is a study of duality; a study of the ties of God and the ties of Caesar; the pull of religion and the pull of the heart; the battle between mercy and justice, compassion and self-pity. For Scobie, the deputy commissioner, take him for all in all, is a decent enough sort of chap of fifty. He loves his wife, but she is not essential to him. When he is passed over for promotion, he knows that her feelings have suffered the sharper slight, so that he is doubly glad when he finds a local Syrian willing to lend him two hundred pounds: it means that Louise can go to South Africa for a much needed holiday. Whilst she is away, he falls in love with a young widow of nineteen who is brought to his colony as the survivor of a torpedoed boat. More out of pity than passion, he makes her his mistress; then, unexpectedly, his wife returns. She asks him to go to communion with her, and, as a Catholic, he knows that, whilst he remains too weak to break with Helen, he cannot do so without committing mortal sin. Again out of pity rather than love, he communicates to please Louise. Then despair sets in, and, rather than break Louise's heart with the truth, he methodically plans his own suicide. Yet, like the whisky priest's death, in no sense does Scobie's suicide invalidate either the faith of Catholicism or the goodness of God. That is made quite clear in the book's closing chapter, which acts as an epilogue (and to which reference will be made shortly in this essay). Indeed, if Scobie's suicide does one thing, it both enforces the mystery of faith and the inscrutability of God's mind; it shows how behind the enormous conflict which life offers on so many levels there is a unified design; how God

by his omnipotence can write straight with crooked lines.

Now these past statements, which, set down like this, may appear bald and dogmatic, have become so integrated in Greene's recent writing that they have been grasped by many critics who do not hold Greene's religious beliefs: indeed, it is but an indication of his power as a pioneer novelist that he is able to make those who do not share his religious views accept their validity within a given situation, whilst in no way inclining them to believe that they have been made the victims of "Papist propaganda."⁷ This is largely so because, when it comes to the crucial point, he refrains from passing any dogmatic judgement. Scobie may or may not have been saved:⁸ that is not the author's concern, because the author's concern has been to tell his story. As the book closes, Mrs. Scobie turns to Father Rank to ask if it is worth praying, if there is any hope for those who wilfully take their lives:

"The Church says. . ."

"I know the Church says. The Church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart."

"You think there's some hope then?" she wearily asked.

"Are you bitter against him?"

"I haven't any bitterness left."

"And do you think God's likely to be more bitter than a woman?" he said with harsh insistence, but she winced away from arguments of hope.

The heart of the matter has been reached; the inner conflict, which in this epilogue shifts from Scobie to Mrs. Scobie, is resolved for the reader, though

Mrs. Scobie remains as yet unconvinced by the priest's reasoning: she is still too bitter about her husband's suicide and hence winces away from "arguments of hope." So it is that, as the reader remembers Father Rank's laugh that rang "as a great empty-sounding bell to and fro, Ho, ho, ho, like a leper proclaiming his misery" and his seeming helplessness, one also recalls his words of consolation to Mrs. Scobie. They are words so simple that they have the breath of actuality about them because Father Rank (who in one sense is the still centre of the book) is presented as a simple man of simple faith; he stands in need of neither allegory nor symbols to explain his meaning.

IV

Greene's novels at their best, and his earlier books to a lesser extent, are not catalogues of fear, chronicles of men in flight; they are accounts of men in pursuit—physically and spiritually—but pursuit which leads to a profounder understanding of themselves, because it drives them to look into themselves and see in whose image they are made. Their pursuit is their salvation. For the shadow of Newman's works lies heavily over those of Greene, and he often quotes from them directly in his various essays about the craft of writing. Often in his novels it is as if he had translated Newman's ideas and thoughts into the language which his own characters would use, were such thoughts and ideas to occur to them. In this there is no straining after effect because in their context the thoughts and ideas appear logical enough. It is as if the dialogue was infused with a natural theology of its own, so that, although Greene's landscape is stark, sordid, and seedy, his picture of man is not a pessimistic one. Time and again one finds the hint projected

⁷ Which is not the case with all his contemporaries, Bruce Marshall, for example.

⁸ One feels that the epigraph for this book has been very carefully chosen. It is taken from Charles Péguy: "*Le Pêcheur est au cœur même de chrétienté. . . Nul n'est aussi compétent que le pêcheur en matière de chrétienté. Nul, si n'est le saint.*"

through his characters that despair is not the final ending; and this note, which is a recurring factor in his writing, is most succinctly presented in *It's a*

Battlefield. As the chaplain (who is the still centre of this book) says, despair is never the final ending, because "one can't hand in a resignation to God."

"Dies Irae" in the Unconscious, or the Significance of Franz Kafka¹

PETER DOW WEBSTER²

THE Kafka problem has become the Kafka quarrel. Critics and readers alike, moved within by forces they deny or reluctantly admit, offer the most diverse responses to the writings and life of one who specialized in his own neurosis and its bewildering consequences. Since he speaks with great penetration of his own problem as a psychoneurotic, and since there is so much of Kafka's vestigial infantilism in all of us, since as men we are all guilty, the critics have explored his symbolism to reconstruct the inner man

from his works. An expert in the artistic creation of fantasy, Kafka suggests the psychoanalyst turned artist. If Edmund Spenser is the poet's poet, then Franz Kafka is the psychologist's perfect dreamer. The *Dies Irae* he reveals in the unconscious as it accuses, tries, and condemns the conscious is an ironical reversal of civilized man's complacent assumption that his ego is a free or significant agent in contacting reality. It is almost mirthful to read Sigmund Freud's dream that where id is, there shall ego be. The problems are many; the critics generally separated into the naturalistic and religious groups. The central issue, as you become one of the jury, is: "Who committed this ancient wrong?"

So perfect is Kafka the artist in projecting this neurosis in the Freudian symbolism and dream-distortion technique that we ourselves are stirred to participate in the dream. We become alert for every sign of the original wound, for the anger of the rejected, insecure, infantile ego, for the displacement of this hate upon itself, for its sense of guilt and unworthiness, its shame, its magnification of the aggressor in fantasy, its helpless terror.

In all of this there is a curiously disturbing detachment. It is as though Kafka were both the dreamer and the spec-

¹ Franz Kafka (1883-1924). The following is a bibliography of his works which have been translated into English: *Amerika*. Preface by Klaus Mann; trans. Edwin Muir. New Directions. Pp. 277. \$1.50. *The Trial*. Trans. Willa and Edwin Muir; illus. Georg Salter. Knopf. Pp. 297. \$2.50. *The Castle*. Introd. by Thomas Mann; trans. Edwin and Willa Muir. Knopf. Pp. 340. \$2.50. *In the Penal Colony: Stories and Short Pieces*. Trans. Willa and Edwin Muir. Schocken. Pp. 320. \$3.00. *Country Doctor: Short Stories*. Trans. and illus. Vera Leslie. Counterpoint Publications (9 Broad Street, Oxford, Eng.). Pp. 47. 5s. *Metamorphosis*. Trans. A. Lloyd; illus. Leslie Sherman. Vanguard. Pp. 98. \$2.75. *Great Wall of China: Stories and Reflections*. Trans. Willa and Edwin Muir. Schocken. Pp. 315. \$3.00. *Diaries*: Vol. I, trans. Joseph Kresh; Vol. II, trans. Hannah Arendt. Schocken. \$3.75 each. *Franz Kafka*, by M. Brod. Schocken. \$3.00. *The Kafka Problem*. Ed. A. Flores. New Directions. Pp. 468. \$5.00. *The Frozen Sea*, by C. Neider. Oxford. Pp. 195. \$3.50. *Kafka: His Mind and His Art*, by C. Neider. Routledge. 12s. 6d.

² Norwich University, Northfield, Vt.; author of "Arrested Individuation or the Problem of Joseph K. and Hamlet," in *American Imago*, November, 1948.

tator of his dreams. No morality such as we know in real life intervenes between the dreamer and his dream. It is a world without actual persons, events, or obstacles. Only the past of the dreamer is strangely active, and the childish fantasy forever dominates the adolescent or mature perspective of things-as-they-should-be. *Alice in Wonderland* is a great fantasy; *Pilgrim's Progress* is a very great allegory; *The Trial* is the projection into the form of fantasy of the reality within an obstructed psyche, a mind divided against itself. The humor of the dream is here; you can sense the displacement, the isolation, the absurd quality of the whole business. The trouble is, you can't dismiss it from your mind. It is a dream that haunts and in a shadowy way reflects the shadows within.

Was Franz Kafka really seeking his indestructible Self? Or did he only think he was? Was his aggressive defiance of the "infant father" the center, the core of his being? Is his real sin the unwillingness to grow up or the inability of an already atrophied personality to face the reality within and without simultaneously? Was his mature shame—his feeling that he had only fooled himself, his sense of having wasted his life in a struggle to preserve the ignoble part of his being—a really calm and wise judgment of the issues in the battle he lost or was it but a reflection within the ego of the humiliation, the masochism, he inflicted in self-punishment upon himself for having willed the death of his father? Was he psychologically predetermined to the conflict by his nervous system, his very weakness of organization necessitating an unusual degree of security with the mother and fear of the father, or did the self within become polluted through a jealousy and rage for which the mature personality must assume responsibility

and which it can negate by conscious redirection? How much can psychoanalysis really activate in the counseling of Dr. Huld, the advocate of the court and pleader for the self-doomed Joseph K.? When you answer these questions, there are countless others.

When we say that his psyche is divided, we are using the same figure of speech Christ used in the "house divided against itself." It is not a fixed status but a dynamic relation characterized by changing degrees of tension, distress, suspicion, fear, and aggression of separately motivated centers within the total self. The three circles are not in consonant flow but get in the way of each other. Instead of being in harmony with his past and his present, Kafka is snagged by his infantile fantasies, which remain dominant because they have never been adequately discharged of their cathexis. Not that anyone is ever completely free. As the court painter, Titorelli, points out, there are only legendary stories of definitive acquittal. The best one can hope for, if he faces the issue squarely, adjusts himself to the present state of affairs, is either ostensible acquittal or indefinite postponement. Once you are on trial, as Leni tells our hero, Joseph K., the best thing to do is to admit guilt and throw yourself on the mercy of the court. For the unconscious is always right. There are no errors (except Freudian slips) in the court of the unconscious. So here is Joseph K., bank assessor, aged thirty, suddenly arrested and seeking for justice as an innocent man; all he wants is his rights, and he can't even see the judge or know what the specifications of his crime are. It is all absurd because the worlds of ego-value and of unconscious truth are not brought into line. Reason must accept unreason; the world within is a world of incommensurables.

For Titorelli in *The Trial* is the painter of the court; he is the maker of unconscious fantasies. He is in a way the private painter of Joseph K.'s succession of emotional experiences; and yet his technique is inherited, and he might as well have been painting a thousand years ago. He learned his trade from his father, and everything he paints must be painted just so. It makes no difference how the judge actually looked; he is going to look a certain way when Titorelli has finished the job by order. It is all in classic style, and the unconscious, which is all that really matters anyhow, knows what these symbols mean. The judges, who decide your case without reference to your plea (for how can the conscious make any impression on the unconscious?), must be interviewed by advocates (psychoanalysts), who understand the symbols of the unconscious. The uninstructed ego is like a child in the presence of inscrutable wisdom and power. But the really important thing is that everyone gets justice. There are no errors. The court is absolutely right. This is the apparently arbitrary power that interferes with a man just when he is going places in the world of business. How stupid to feel this fatigue, anxiety, and shame. If it were a problem that really mattered—at the bank, Joseph K. would show who he was and what he could do. This is like the sense of futility and terror, of absurdity and infinite sorrow, that Poe felt when his unconscious, in the form of a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," stepped across the threshold and remained perched above the bust of Pallas just above his chamber door. It has been the experience of millions and will be of millions more as the childish fantasy retained in the unconscious conflicts with the adjustment of the ego to reality.

What Kafka does in *The Trial* is to narrate with perfect detachment the symbolic sequence of past libido-fantasies in conflict with everything the persona wants to be and think and do. Now Joseph K., our hero, enters the realm of unconscious memories in the studio of a painter who is both a father-surrogate and a dynamic image-maker fixated on the anal level. He enters the studio, of course, from his present point in time. Here is adolescent or mature sex drive, already crippled by the past it is seeking and by which it is also bound. At this stage, Joseph K. knows sex only as furtive prostitution, and the feeling-tone is projected onto the leader of the group of girls who accompany him up the stairs to the studio of unconscious memories. Titorelli is in his nightshirt, as we would expect him to be. Infantile fantasies have already assaulted Joseph K. in an almost revolting scene at the entrance to the studio, and the past and present are interwoven in the action which follows. Adolescent libido is locked out, though the girls are greatly amused and want to enter the studio. The action is reversed as in a dream, and the girls function in answer to the effort that Joseph K. is making toward complete heterosexuality, completely genitalized. Of all the surprising things in this nonsensical world, the girls also belong to the court. Can you imagine that! Well, it is the secret for which Joseph K. had been looking, with the forward thrust of the libido, while he was fixated on the lower, anal level. Does he recognize its significance? No. Why? Because the really significant thing in a dream is always suggested as an incidental, a thing of no account at all. Titorelli's pointed statement is followed up as information by a remark that strips it of all disturbing

significance. Read the rest of the scene and see how perfect its symbolism is.

But at the end, the dream having revealed its all, the old child in the mature Joseph takes over. Given his choice of going out of the studio of unconscious memory by the door behind the bed or the door behind which the girls (hilariously stupid and meaningful) were waiting, Joseph goes out through childhood fantasy, where again the imagery is that of the child wondering about the source, not the fulfilment, of his being. And all he takes away is his own fixation. He buys ever so many pictures of "Wild Nature, a Heathscape," all with the same two stunted trees, some darkish grass, and a sunset. Even Titorelli points out that Joseph K. just loves depressing pictures. He takes them back to his office in the bank and locks them up in a bottom drawer of his desk. He is now going to pay attention to things that really matter. This is the humor, the satire, the direction, the wisdom of the dream trying to make the dreamer's condition known to him. For the dream itself is but a shadow in which the past and the present are perfectly interwoven. To understand the significance of this chapter is to be prepared for the complete stupidity of Joseph K. in his next and final session with the advocate, whom he dismisses with tragic nonchalance. Joseph K. is one of the men who must die because they cannot or will not wait until favorable contact is made with their unconscious. I need not recall for those who have read Brod that throughout this period Kafka was making and breaking a formal engagement with F. B., and that the Fräulein Bürstner of *The Trial* is the artistic appropriation of the girl in the flesh.

Chapter ix of *The Trial* has been the happy hunting ground of all the cabals.

Critics read it and talk about it as though it were not an integral part of the story of Joseph K.'s arrest, trial, search, and death. Critics find in it a satire on the ecclesiastical cabala, an exposé of its mumbo-jumbo, and even an allegory of some kind of undefined but tremendously transcendental truth. As in the scene with the painter, we are again in the realm of Joseph K.'s inner world. And the only incommensurable elements are the fantasies of the unconscious in the presence of the ego and its canons of logic. It is of the same texture as the rest of *The Trial* and completes the story of Joseph K.'s inquiry before the court's verdict is executed upon him.

Though a Czech Jew by birth, Kafka had only the cursory form of the Judaic faith, picked up incidentally in the formal celebration of the principal holidays. He was irked by his father's hypocrisy and lack of faith. Even though he had been taught its glorious faith, he could not have found its peace and beauty until he had forgiven his own father, been reconciled to his father, and been born again, heir to the promises and the covenant made with Abraham. Whatever the explanation may be, probably a further attempt to escape his father as fantasy created in infancy, Kafka, like Freud, wanted to belong to the majority group, sought faith through the medium of Kierkegaard's work, but, doomed by his own unconscious, repudiated the general neurosis as cure for the private neurosis. The symbolism of the cathedral scene is outwardly Christian, but the parable of the man from the country and the doorkeeper of the law has an unmistakably Judaic tone.

Just before he leaves the conscious for the unconscious, Leni, that lovely little maid who waited on the advocate, Dr. Huld, calls by phone, learns where he is

going, and with pity in her voice says: "They're driving you hard." As symbolic of the Eve that Joseph K. carried in his heart, he found her unexpected sympathy almost more than he could bear. For the cathedral is again the unconscious, but the most dreaded of all aspects of the unconscious—the religious. Here is the last chance to prevent the unknown from remaining forever unknowable. Here is the chance to save one's life by losing it, to achieve the indestructible in one's self by entering through that one door prepared for Joseph K. alone. For Kafka knew that, although there were a thousand places of refuge, there was only one place of salvation. But it is Joseph K.'s conscious that is flowing down into the universal womb of the unconscious, whence he might have been born again but was not.

It is always a particular man or ego that comes into the Presence. It is always the personal self that one has protected from invasion, from the *tremendum*. The selected details and attitudes are perfect. Joseph sees the old woman kneeling before the Madonna. He sees the verger lighting the candles on the altar. It grows dark. One tall, thick candle on the pillar makes the darkness more visible. He moves as in a dream to a small adjacent chapel, where he is metamorphosed in dream magic into an errant knight, leaning on his sword, which is stuck into the bare ground; and he stands there as a knight watching some event unfolding before his eyes. As spectator and knight in one person, he sees Christ being laid in the tomb. The painting was conventional in style (like those of Titorelli), but quite recent. If ever our hearts are moved in this story, it is here. A kind of Gestalt in which the whole psyche moves with precision and beauty toward its fulfillment in death and rebirth has occurred in the

incidental chapel to the side. The ultimate question in Kafka criticism is this: could Joseph K. have dreamed of the Resurrection morn?

But Joseph, with the ignorance of the dreamer, as dictated and demanded by his diseased ego, turns off the electric torch no wiser than he was before he saw it. Our hearts almost literally burn within us. We thought he might be saved. Though a soul fails to get born, aesthetically we are moved by the splendor of the truth, its consonance with every other lost chance—or chance at inward knowledge given by a gracious unconscious to a corrupted ego. It is pathetic; it is awful; it is tragic in a casual, dreamlike way. For, after all, what is there to a dream? For the critics to talk at this point about the ecclesiastical cabala being satirized or exposed by Kafka shows the incredible stupidity of the critic who can't interpret the dream. This is Joseph K.'s consciousness flowing down as spectator into the perfectly religious unconscious.

Well, we go on with the rest of the tragic story. There is no communal faith manifest in the sacrifice of the mass and the communicants' repeating the eternal reconciliation of the particular and the universal in the union of God and man in Christ. It is Joseph K. alone who comes into colloquy with the last paternal imago his unconscious can create—the prison chaplain. This is the voice without the law, not the voice from within the door to the law. Joseph hasn't entered; he is the man from the country. He has been accused; the case is going badly; the unconscious makes a supreme effort to speak by parable; this is the father-imago as preceptor and prophet. In the cleanest moment of the ego's life, relations between the absolute and the ego are almost friendly, and again we wait breathlessly to see what will happen.

Nothing happens. A single effort is made to look pass the censor that Joseph K. has created. He is intimidated by the fears deposited in the censor, or doorkeeper. The most ridiculous vestige of the infantile father-fantasy enters the construct. The doorkeeper is a Tartar, with a long nose and, of all things, vermin in his collar. This is, of course, the resurgence, at the most crucial point of all, of the decomposed image of the father—the imago, or fantasy, of the father as one who threatens dire punishments to the boy who wants to know where babies come from, who has only the crude fantasies of the scene in the studio with Titorelli, the unconscious image-maker and painter of things in true, classical, archetypal style. The father who withholds knowledge is the Hermann Kafka known in fantasy to little Franz Kafka. So, Joseph K. sits down and waits before the construct manufactured by the little boy's frustrated quest for forbidden knowledge and waits until he dies—even though he is now in the very prime of life. For a whole year has this case been going on, and Joseph K. is now thirty-one years old, the same age as Kafka himself. Can you believe it? Well, it is so. He begs, he prays, naturally, to the vermin he has projected into this ambivalent image of the father; he bribes, and his bribes are accepted. But having failed to reconstruct a father who welcomes masculinity in the son, he can return only to the home he has made for his particular father in his own unconscious. To what a different home did that other prodigal son return when he came to himself and moved in action toward a reconciliation of the past and the present. His youthful sins in the unconscious were discharged in the forward thrust of a living soul.

But not so with Joseph K. He resorts,

as usual, to endless dispute. He wants to know without accepting the risk of action. And he learns that "the right perception of any matter and a misunderstanding of the same matter do not wholly exclude each other." This is the vice in the intellect of the defense mechanism known as "isolation." It is characteristically true of scientists and English professors. The harassed ego abstracts all feeling-tones or affects and rationalizes until every possibility but the right one has been considered. And so, in the next scene, "The End," the court, having rendered its decision, the procedures having quietly drawn to a close, Joseph K. is led to castration and death. His logic was infallible. And the logic of the unconscious is absolute. "As a man thinketh in his heart [or unconscious], so is he." Surely this, the second of Kafka's major works, is the most perfect expressionistic writing in the world today.

A word of explanation—since the interpretation follows the dream. In formulating the fantasy-father, the five-year-old Franz Kafka recreated the ancient wrong and held his father guilty of destroying his personality for the rest of his life. Fixated on this infantile level of libido, he sought release in genitalized form only to be thrown back on his own narcissism and the terror of homosexuality. Experimental sexual relations in puberty found him constantly defeated from within, the victim of the fantasy-father who castrates. To guard himself from the disease within, he identifies himself exclusively with the ego and strives to escape from the father-fantasy within and the real father in the home. *Amerika* (1912) is a projection of the geographical escape and the movement, within, through the perils of masochism before the male to the Oklahoma theater where he is accepted as a person. He

strives in the social ego to obtain maturity. *The Trial* (1914) records his arrest at the age of thirty by an invasion from the distressed and dammed-up libido in the unconscious. The infantile fantasy is worked out, with the logic of the unconscious, and its power, prevailing. He moves on in *The Castle* (1922) toward the further quest of the unconscious, resolves some aspects of the cultural dilemmas in fantasy—in general toward greater understanding and acquiescence in the role of the unconscious. Recently, additional chapters have been published giving greater cohesion to the unfinished work. At thirty-two, Kafka left his father's home; at thirty-six, he wrote the hundred-page "Letter to My Father,"

his apologia pro vita sua, never delivered by his mother and still published only in part. With Dora Dymant he knew a brief season of love, as he fought the ravages of the tuberculosis he claimed to have chosen as a way out of marriage. His short life (1883-1924) is told in moving form by Brod, but these novels, and short stories and tales like "The Metamorphosis," "In the Penal Colony," and "The Burrow," reveal still better the reality within a psyche destroying itself by hatred for the father displaced upon itself. He is a magnificent writer. He is perfectly honest—except for that statistical criminal within, which denied the reality of the voice from within the law itself.

Chaucer and Shakespeare¹

MARCHETTE CHUTE²

ANYONE who reads Chaucer's poems and Shakespeare's plays knows how alike in many ways the two men are as writers. They are the two great dramatic poets in the English language, and if Chaucer cannot quite call Shakespeare "brother" he can at least call him "cousin."

Not only do Chaucer and Shakespeare have this kinship as artists, but biographical research reveals the delightful fact that they were also very much alike as people. The two men resemble each other much more closely than they resemble any other poet or novelist or playwright in English literature.

One of the most important things they had in common was that they both

solved in the same way the problem of how a writer can make a living. The problem is complicated enough today, but it was much worse then. In Chaucer's day the usual solution was to take holy orders, like John Lydgate or Francis Petrarch, and be supported by the church while you went on with your writing. By Shakespeare's day the Reformation had largely closed off this particular avenue—in England, at least; but the invention of printing had made it possible for a man like Robert Greene, who wrote quickly enough and steadily enough, to make a living as the Renaissance equivalent of a pulp writer. But Chaucer did not enter the church, and Shakespeare did not become a journalistic hack.

Another device, and this one was used in both Chaucer's and Shakespeare's day,

¹ A paper read at the NCTE convention at Buffalo, November 22-26, 1949.

² Author of *Geoffrey Chaucer of England* (Dutton, 1946) and *Shakespeare of London* (Dutton, 1950).

was to get yourself a patron. This was never a completely satisfactory arrangement, as Dr. Johnson discovered later on, since it forced a writer into trying to please a prettily costumed lord who knew remarkably little about serious creative work. It is a rather interesting coincidence that both Chaucer and Shakespeare, when they were in their late twenties, worked briefly for a patron. Chaucer wrote a narrative poem, *The Book of the Duchess*, for the Duke of Lancaster, and Shakespeare wrote two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, for the Earl of Southampton. The three poems are alike in one way, at least: they are laborious imitations of literary models that were currently fashionable—Chaucer's of the French school of *The Romance of the Rose* and Shakespeare's of the lush Renaissance school that had been popularized by Lodge and Daniel. No one would have guessed that men who wrote poems like these would eventually become the two most original and vigorous poets in the English language, and perhaps they would not if they had gone on writing for Lancaster and Southampton. They would have been obliged to turn out correctly fashionable poetry until the fashion changed, and then they would have been expected to change with it. Instead, they wrote nothing more for any patron; and although Shakespeare implied in his dedication to *Lucrece* that he was going to write another poem for Southampton, he never did.

Another device whereby a man could be a writer and still eat three meals a day was to be born into a rich family and have a private income. Both Chaucer and Shakespeare were born into middle-class families. Chaucer's father was a wine importer and Shakespeare's was a glover; and although both John Chaucer and

John Shakespeare were reasonably well-to-do men, they could not afford to give their families any special privileges. Writers or not, both sons had to earn their own livings.

Both Chaucer and Shakespeare found the same solution to the problem. They worked all their lives at full-time jobs, and they did their writing, some of the greatest writing in the history of the world, in their spare time.

It is true that in Shakespeare's case this spare-time writing brought him money. But it was not enough to live on, and it never supplied him with more than a small, supplementary income. He wrote less than forty plays in about twenty years of work in the theater, and, since the average Elizabethan play sold for seven or eight pounds, this would amount to an income of less than twenty pounds a year. Twenty pounds a year would not have gone very far with Shakespeare, who spent sixteen times that amount on a single real-estate purchase.

Chaucer earned his living as a government official, serving three kings in a variety of public offices. Most of his life was spent in what we would now call the civil service, and he represented the English government abroad in a series of diplomatic negotiations with France and Italy. For twelve years he held an extremely onerous position in the London customs; and he was also a justice of the peace, a member of Parliament, financial supervisor of the King's Office of Works, administrator of North Petherton Forest, and found time, in his spare moments, to administer wardships, serve on various boards and commissions, and incidentally to write the series of poems that culminated in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Shakespeare kept equally busy. He earned his living as an actor, not one of the part-time actors who lurked hopefully

around London looking for jobs but as one of the top members of London's greatest repertory company. The actors owned their own company, and Shakespeare and his associates were responsible not only for the details of their own profession but also for choosing the plays, costuming them, getting them into production, advertising them, and showing a weekly profit. They even, after a few years of association with each other, bought their own theater and added the final complication of acting as theater landlords to all their other activities.

It is sometimes thought that Shakespeare took up acting merely to get a start in the theater and that he gave it up when he became an established playwright, but this theory is not supported by the documentary evidence. Shakespeare was an established actor in 1592, when he first began to attract attention as a playwright. He was still acting in 1598, when he took a major part in one of Ben Jonson's tragedies. He was still acting in 1603, when he took a major part in one of Ben Jonson's comedies. And he was still acting as late as 1609, on the evidence of Cuthbert Burbage. Cuthbert Burbage was the brother of the famous Richard and was the only nonactor who owned stock in the Globe; and he had been interlocked with the fortunes of Shakespeare's company from the time it was organized. Cuthbert Burbage testified in court that Shakespeare had been one of the "men players" who acted at the Blackfriars theater after the company took it over; and the lease on the Blackfriars was not signed until 1608, with a delayed opening the following year. This puts Shakespeare's career as an actor from 1592 to 1609, at least, and makes it parallel almost exactly his career as a playwright. The first record of production of one of Shakespeare's

plays is that of March 3, 1592, and the last play he wrote before his retirement, *The Tempest*, was given at court the first of November, 1611.

We have it on the evidence of a rather disgruntled contemporary that acting was "the most excellent vocation in the world for money"—which was true if the actor was a shareholder in a company as prosperous as Shakespeare's. Five members of the company—Burbage, Phillips, Pope, Condell, and Shakespeare—were able to make extensive real-estate investments, with Phillips, Condell, and Shakespeare eventually retiring to country estates. And five members of the company—Burbage, Phillips, Pope, Heminges, and Shakespeare—paid the stiff fee required by the Heralds' Office and were given coats-of-arms.

Many other actors were also playwrights, and even Shakespeare was not as hard-working a man as Thomas Heywood of the Queen's company. Heywood wrote all or part of two hundred and twenty plays—in contrast to Shakespeare's thirty-six—and when he was an old man, long past the age of Shakespeare's retirement, he was still appearing as an actor on the London stage. People expected to work hard in those days, and Shakespeare could give his days to acting and his nights to writing with no sense that he ought to be coddled and protected because he was a creative artist. It is doubtful whether Shakespeare thought of himself as an artist or whether Chaucer did either. Like the painters of the great days in Flanders, they thought of themselves not primarily as artists but as workmen.

Chaucer did not even call himself a poet. He reserved that great name for Dante and the classics. He called himself a "maker," and Shakespeare would probably have done the same. Neither

one had any itch for fame, since they both deliberately chose to write in what seemed to be perishable mediums. Chaucer wrote in English at a time when the language was changing so rapidly that no thoughtful poet who valued his reputation with posterity used anything but Latin. But Chaucer at least saw to it that his work was published, and Shakespeare did not even do that. After one brief bid for fame in his late twenties, when *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* were handsomely published, he turned his back on the literary public, let his sonnets lie in manuscript, and spent the rest of his career at the despised trade of playwright. In his own lifetime various enterprising publishers brought out printed versions of some of his plays, but it was not until seven years after his death that Heminges and Condell brought out a complete edition. Shakespeare would probably have echoed what Chaucer said about posterity in *The House of Fame*:

Sufficeth me, if I were dead,
That no wight have my name in hand.
I know myself best how I stand.

Men as great as these two needed nothing to lean on, not even the hope of literary immortality.

When Shakespeare's plays were finally collected, the publishing arrangements were made by two actors in his company, not for money but for love—"to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare." Ben Jonson, who also loved him, called him "gentle Shakespeare," and it is pleasant to remember that this is exactly the term that one of Chaucer's literary friends used for him also. It was John Lydgate who spoke of Chaucer's "gentleness," as Ben Jonson did of Shakespeare's. Most major writers are rather tense and troubled men and not always considerate.

Chaucer and Shakespeare were the exceptions.

This rather casual, relaxed quality of theirs extended to many aspects of their work. They both lived in periods when writers were expected to act as reformers and to point out the evils of the world in which they lived; but neither Chaucer nor Shakespeare tried to reform anyone in their writing. They show, as a matter of fact, very little interest in local events, and, while the writings of most of their colleagues are riddled with contemporary allusions, Chaucer is content with one mention of the Peasants' Revolt and Shakespeare with a reference to the departure of Essex for Ireland. This is the sort of thing that makes their work very difficult to date, but it also helps to make it dateless.

Certain things mattered very much to them, while certain things did not matter at all; and perhaps the intensity of their inward creative life could only be sustained because they were both so relaxed on the surface. Neither man was born an infant prodigy, and both men matured unusually late after a great deal of experimentation. They were not happy accidents as poets. What they had, they earned, by hard work and by a profound respect for the craft of writing. Leonard Digges said of Shakespeare, "Poets are born, not made." But Ben Jonson, who knew Shakespeare better and who also knew much more about the art of writing, said exactly the reverse:

For a good poet's made as well as born,
And such wert thou.

Anyone can test the point for himself by reading Shakespeare's early plays and Chaucer's early poetry. They were not gentle with themselves or with their own standards of truthfulness, however gentle they may have been with other people.

There is one aspect of Shakespeare's

temperament for which he has sometimes been scolded: his interest in money and the carefulness of all his financial transactions. Apparently this is supposed to be conduct unbecoming a poet, but, if so, Chaucer must share the same indictment. It would be odd if either man had been careless with money, considering the experience they had in handling it. Chaucer, for instance, was Controller of the Customs for twelve years and was responsible for auditing accounts that ran to over a million dollars a year in modern money; and as for Shakespeare, the first appearance he makes in the Court records is as a collector of money on a warrant from the Privy Council.

Both men worked for kings and wore their livery, Chaucer that of Richard II because he was an official in the royal household and Shakespeare that of James I because his whole company, himself included, had been made Grooms of the Chamber. Both poets also contributed their services to tournaments. Chaucer supervised the erection of the scaffolds at one of Richard's tournaments because he was head of the Office of

Works at the time and was responsible for the royal building operations. Shakespeare wrote the motto that was carried by the Earl of Rutland at one of the tournaments in the reign of James, and the painting that went with it was supplied by Richard Burbage, who was something of an artist as well as the interpreter of Hamlet and King Lear.

Both Chaucer and Shakespeare testified for friends of theirs in London law suits, testimony that is still extant, and I am happy to say that in both cases their side won. Both men had three children, and there are even such minor resemblances between them as that fact that Chaucer's son paid a fee to avoid the honor of being given a knighthood, and so did Shakespeare's son-in-law.

Both men were Londoners, Chaucer by birth and Shakespeare by right of adoption, and both men had something of the spirit of that wonderful, vigorous, unmatchable little walled city. London was lucky to get them, and we have been lucky to inherit them. It is a great legacy that the teachers of English are helping to pass on.

Let's Face the Facts about Writing A Look at Our Common Problems¹

RUDOLF FLESCH²

LET me start by saying that I am rather overwhelmed by the topic that has been assigned to me—particularly by the subtitle of this speech, which is listed on the program as "A Look at Our Common

Problems." I can assure you that I feel very humble in attempting to talk about the common problems of college composition teachers. The plain fact is that I have had no experience whatever with college composition, either as a teacher or as a student. To be sure, I am a dues-paying member of the National Council of Teachers of English; but I am probably the only member of this organization

¹ A speech delivered at the Conference on College Composition and Communication held at Chicago March 24-25.

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who acquired a knowledge of English abroad, and as a grownup person at that. My entering wedge into the NCTE was the fact that for a number of years I have been teaching an evening course for adults at New York University.

This may sound like an exceedingly slim qualification for addressing you. On second thought, though, there is some advantage to my position. Not only can I speak as a detached outsider, but I can also speak as a person who for years has been exposed to the products and effects of conventional composition-teaching. In the catalogue of New York University my course is listed as "Techniques of Practical Writing." It is designed for people engaged in businesses or professions who feel they don't know enough about how to write. Most of my students are college graduates who have had the proper dose of freshman English. But that didn't satisfy them. In fact, the reason they come to my classes and pay for it in hard-earned money and precious evening time is that their college English courses have not prepared them for the writing they have to do every day. Practically every one of them is a living witness to the failure of the traditional college course in composition.

Now, what do these people want to get from adult evening classes that they didn't get in college? First of all, let me say what they don't want: They don't want any instruction in grammar, usage, and spelling. Practically none of them has any trouble on that score. They also don't want to be taught what is usually called "creative writing." To be sure, thousands of people all over the country spend their evenings trying to learn creative writing. But my students are of a different kind. They simply feel there is something they ought to learn that will improve their letters, their memoranda,

their reports, their booklets, their press releases, their trade articles—in short, the practical everyday writing that more and more people nowadays are called upon to do. As a matter of fact, a good many of my students come because they feel the ability to write will lift them out of routine clerical or secretarial jobs onto a more responsible, semi-executive level. And they are quite right.

Let me be presumptuous enough to tell you something about my methods. Maybe "methods" is too big a word. Let's call them "teaching aids and practical devices."

To begin with, my students don't write any themes or essays. From what I know of college composition classes, there is a good deal of theme- and essay-writing going on. My students don't write any essays because an essay is the one thing they will never be called upon to write.

You may remember that this speech is called "Let's Face the Facts about Writing." Well, let's first face the fact that today in America the essay is practically extinct. If you need any evidence, let me refer you to a recent collection of articles from the *Saturday Review of Literature*. It appeared under the title "Writing for Love or Money." Apparently the editor felt there ought to be something on essay-writing in it, but all he could dig up was an article called "The Lost Art of the Essay," written in 1934. Even then, the editor says, the essay was "already rapidly disappearing."

Instead of essays, my students write or bring in samples of the work they are actually engaged in—letters, pamphlets, reports—the types of writing that are part of the tissue of our civilization. Aside from that, I also give my students assignments. I ask them to bring a newspaper to each class and do certain edi-

torial or rewrite jobs on selected pieces. For instance, they may be asked to cut an article to a specified length; or to rewrite a straight report into a feature story with direct quotations; or to rewrite a piece from the woman's page for male readers; or to make a sequence story out of material written in the conventional inverted-pyramid form; or to simplify a difficult editorial to make it understandable to high-school students. I also ask them to analyze the vocabulary and syntax of the originals with that of their rewrites. In other words, the emphasis is not on teaching them how to get their own ideas down on paper but on techniques of communicating a given set of facts or ideas to a given audience. This is clearly the common denominator of their problems, and this is what I am trying to teach them.

It seems to me that this is also the basic goal of college composition-teaching. After all, there is only a small minority of college students in this country who need to know something about how to form a literary style, but there are millions who need simple techniques in organizing facts and ideas for a given purpose. And, let me add, I am extremely skeptical about the possibility of teaching anybody anything about how to form a literary style.

Usually, I start my classes with a little diagnostic test I have devised, which gives me a pretty good notion of each student's writing ability. Let me quote to you one of the tests I use. The students are handed the following:

Psychological Abstracts (August 1948, No. 3439) contains the following abstract of "The Pecuniary Honesty of the Public at Large" by Curtis B. Merritt and Richard B. Fowler (*Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1948, v. 43, pp. 90-93):

"Postcards or stamped, addressed letters were dropped on sidewalks in many cities. 85%

of the simple message letters were posted, but only 54% of the letters containing lead slugs of 50-cent size were posted. Sample observations showed that letters are promptly picked up, showing general altruism and responsibility of Americans. But promise of pecuniary gain decreases honesty about one third."

Use these facts as the basis of a brief article (say, 500 words) that will attract and hold the interest of a casual magazine or Sunday-feature reader. Try to dramatize the facts. Try to find an arresting title, beginning, and ending.

This test reveals very clearly a person's ability to rethink and reorganize material for a specified purpose. A few people seem to have a natural ability for this and come up with a fairly professional-looking little article. Many students, however, are completely baffled by the problem and hand in practically a copy of the original scientific abstract. At the end of the course my students get a similar test. By that time they have usually learned that it will not do to bombard a casual newspaper reader with words like "pecuniary honesty" or with a string of dry percentage figures.

Their most typical reaction is surprise at being taught to use informal English. They have a feeling that it is a radical departure to use colloquial idioms or contractions in everyday written communications. Over and over again I have to prove to them that for most practical purposes colloquial English is acceptable and usually more effective.

To put it bluntly, the notion of speech levels or functional varieties of English simply has not penetrated to the American public. Let's face the fact—I see here another chance of getting back to my title—let's face the fact that to the average person all colloquial and idiomatic English comes under the heading of slang, which is considered inferior and never to be used in writing. And when you talk about colloquial language, the

average person will invariably think you are talking about local dialects. And, of course, you are not supposed to use local dialects in writing, either.

The way I see it, the most important thing to teach a student of composition is exactly this—the concept of functional varieties of English. This is the basic insight that must precede any attempt at effective communication. Once you have taught a student that he has to make a choice among different types of English for different types of communications, you have put him on the road to good writing.

As I said before, I don't know from my own experience how this matter is handled in a typical college freshman class. I do know, however, how it is handled in most textbooks. To be sure, my favorite, Perrin's *Writer's Guide*, starts out with a chapter on the varieties of English. But Perrin seems to be an exception. Let me quote to you just one example, the impressive *Modern Rhetoric*, by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, that was published last year. Of the 532 pages of this text, a little over one page is devoted to the differences among colloquial, informal, and formal language. This is what the authors have to say:

... the problem of appropriateness is important and deserves fuller treatment.

In the first place, there is what may be called the dignity and social standing of the word. Like human beings, a word tends to be known by the company it keeps. Words like *caboodle* and *gumption* are good colloquial words and perfectly appropriate to the informal give-and-take of conversation. But they would be out of place in a dignified and formal utterance. For example, a speech welcoming a great public figure in which he was complimented on his "statesman-like gumption" would be absurd. To take another example, many of us use the slang term *guy*, and though, like much slang, it has lost what pungency it may once have had,

its rather flippant breeziness is not inappropriate in some contexts. But it would be foolish to welcome our elder statesman by complimenting him on being a "wise and venerable guy." The shoe, it is only fair to say, can pinch the other foot. Certain literary and rather highfalutin terms, in a colloquial context, sound just as absurd. We do not praise a friend for his "dexterity" or for his "erudition"—not at least when we meet him on the street, or chat with him across the table.

The fact that words are known by the company they keep does not, however, justify snobbishness in diction. Pomposity is, in the end, probably in even worse taste than the blurting out of a slang term on a formal occasion. Tact and common sense have to be used. But the comments made above do point to certain levels of usage of which most of us are already more or less aware.

After this the authors reprint a diagram from the *American College Dictionary*, and that's all there is to the treatment of the varieties of English.

I think this is a fair example of our topsy-turvy method of teaching English composition. Let me add that the unit that starts the Brooks and Warren *Rhetoric* is entitled "Finding a True Subject." How many college students do you think will be confronted with that problem in their later lives? Obviously, only the few who will go into professional free-lance writing. I am sure you will agree with me that the training of free-lance writers is not the most important aim of college composition-teaching.

Once we have admitted that a grasp of the varieties of English is essential in English composition, we are faced by the fact—and here is another one to face—that the sheer mechanics of putting informal English on paper are a complete mystery to the average student. In teaching my classes at New York University I have learned that it is necessary to teach people the elements of punctuation in connection with quoted dialogue or to tell them which contractions are

permissible in written English and which are not. I have come to the conclusion that a good many people never use direct quotations in their writing simply because they don't know just where to put the commas and the periods and the quotation marks. Similarly, most people go through their lives without realizing that it is possible to write such things as *I'm* and *he's*.

Of course, the teaching of functional varieties of English is simply a conspicuous example of the scientific approach to rhetoric. Sooner or later we will put composition-teaching on a scientific basis, just as grammar- and usage-teaching are gradually being put on a scientific basis. Of course, whenever I look at the monthly "Current English Forum" in *College English*, I realize how far we still are from a victory of science, even in the field of grammar and usage. To me, it seems humiliating and somewhat ridiculous that in a professional journal elementary points of usage have to be defended over and over again against what amounts to sheer superstition. I can't imagine that it would be necessary in a mathematics journal, for instance, to warn the subscribers every month against elementary fallacies in arithmetic. However, as we all know, scientific linguistics will have a long way to go until it is universally recognized by English teachers.

The same thing is true of scientific rhetoric. By "scientific rhetoric" I mean experimental psychology in the fields of thinking and language, research findings in the field of mass communications, and so on. As far as I can see, English teachers seem to have very little interest in such things. If they are discussed on college campuses, it is apt to be anywhere else but in the English department. In connection with my readability-measurement formula I have exchanged letters

with a great many college and university people who showed an interest in the scientific approach to writing. To the best of my knowledge there was not one college composition teacher among them. The letters came mostly from departments of journalism, psychology departments, and schools of education. Sometimes I wonder why English departments are so short of pioneers.

I am afraid this attitude has done the profession a tremendous disservice. I have done a good deal of work with government agencies and business organizations and known from countless experiences that the average official or businessman considers an English teacher as an utterly impractical person who spends his life worrying about split infinitives and teaching people to say "It is I" instead of "It is me." It would never occur to a business executive or government official to call upon an English teacher for help and advice in a practical situation. When it comes to a problem in English composition—such as the preparation of a booklet or the writing of instructions or institutional advertising—they call in public relations people, psychologists, personnel experts, advertising people, management engineers, and correspondence counselors. There are even several people in the country who invested in the price of my books and proceeded to set up shop as so-called "readability experts." To me it is sad to see the English-teaching profession held in so little esteem. Maybe the reason is that the ideal aim of traditional composition-teaching is a perfect formal essay. To me, that ideal aim would be a readable union contract or a self-explanatory insurance policy.

To recapture the lost territory, composition teachers will have to come down to earth and up to date. They will have to

take their job seriously rather than consider it simply a way station on the road to teaching literature. They will have to devise methods of teaching writing as an essential tool in an industrial civilization. They will have to abandon the conventional method of imitating literary models—and outdated literary models at that. They will have to recognize that mass communications are worth studying and analyzing. They will have to acknowledge the fact that the essay is dead and that the business memorandum is alive. They will have to teach college students a great many things that will be practically useful to them and that are not being taught today. For example, a composition course should include such necessary editorial skills as abstracting, digesting and cutting, the writing of captions for illustrations, and the treatment of graphs and statistical tables. It should give the student familiarity with a scientific modern system of punctuation and a basic knowledge of how to prepare material for a printer.

Maybe what I have just said has given

you the impression that I am overemphasizing minor, mechanical matters. I didn't mean to. Let me say again that the main business of college composition, as I see it, is to teach students the organization of facts and ideas in the variety of current English that fits the purpose at hand.

Maybe this definition will leave many of you unsatisfied. Maybe it will seem too humble to you. Let's face another fact: for most people today writing is simply a part of everyday living, and not a very glamorous part at that. If you pardon the expression, I think it should be taught like cooking. Surely you would agree that cooking shouldn't be taught with complete disregard for the science of nutrition and with heavy emphasis on such things as bouillabaisse, pheasant under glass, or *crêpes Suzette*. Obviously, that wouldn't make sense. Yet, in composition, this is the established, traditional approach. And consequently, when it comes to writing, most of our college graduates are like the bride who doesn't know how to boil an egg.

*The Teaching of Poetry*¹

HENRY W. WELLS²

A GLANCE at the literary scholarship of 1949 devoted to English and American poetry readily leads to the conclusion that business is as usual. Such would be a natural, though, I believe, an erroneous conclusion.

¹ A speech delivered at the NCTE convention in Buffalo, November 22-26, 1949.

² Columbia University. Author of *The American Way of Poetry, New Poets from Old, Elizabethan and Jacobean Playwrights, The Realm of Literature, Piers the Plowman in Modern English Verse*. Editor (with Arthur E. Christy) of *World Literature: An Anthology of Human Experience*.

Publications, as expected, have been numerous. On the whole, biography and criticism prove more conspicuous than editorial achievements. Among the lives of the poets have been Hanford on Milton, Fagin on Poe, Pollard on Whittier, Neff on Robinson, and Rusk on Emerson. Among the interpretations of individual authors have been Elizabeth Drew on T. S. Eliot and Donald Stauffer on both Shakespeare and Yeats. A collection of essays on contemporary American poets comes to us from Lloyd Frankenberg.

The excellent English critic, C. M. Bowra, best known for his work in comparative literature, contributes *The Creative Element*. Especially in America very able and compendious surveys of a wide field of poetry and criticism are to be found, as a rule lacking, however, in any genuinely original contribution. In our most ambitious works we are prone to be eclectic and encyclopedic. Last year, for instance, an example of this sort of writing at its best, and one still enjoyed, appeared in Stanley Hyman's *The Armed Vision*, and most of us are familiar with the skilful anthologizing of R. W. Stallman. This year has produced William Van O'Connor's *Sense and Sensibility in Modern Poetry*, which, by virtue of its emphasis on the language of poetry, I personally find to be the most revealing summary of the subject. More general in their references, but pertinent to our interests, are Gilbert Highet's study of our heritage from ancient literature and Warren and Wellek's *Theory of Literature*. We are growing extremely skilful in clearing out the icebox and warming up yesterday's food. The progressive American college thus becomes a highly modernized and massive deep-freeze for European ideas of the last generation. No corridors have so persistent an echo as the academic because our minds are, as we shall see, better trained to collect and to repeat than to invent or to create.

The fifteen books just mentioned stand among the most warmly received and widely read works on poetry to appear in English during the year that has passed. Actually, however, I do not believe that any one of them, competent as it may be, contributes materially to the most vital, important, and desirable pressure now being felt for the advance of the study of poetry.

The critical and important question which I shall try to answer is not how

many notable and competent books of or about poetry in English have appeared in 1949 but what books, types of books, or intellectual activity of any sort promise most to advance the teaching of poetry and the progress of our culture in this particular art. To discover who are serving our needs best, it is necessary to determine what our needs really are. True, there are many doubts and many widely differing answers to this problem, for, apart from "truth" itself, few words remain so undefined as "English" in its pedagogical sense. I shall answer to the best of my ability.

My answer is very simple. Any thought or practice tending to unify the studies of literature and composition is at the same time conservative, radical, and wise. Any writing encouraging the further separation of these studies, as they have so largely been divorced during the first half of this century, is essentially obscurantist, eccentric, unprogressive, and regrettable. The philosophy of literary study and especially of the study of poetry, by definition the most conspicuously creative of all types of literature, has for nearly half a century assumed a complexion for which no parallel is afforded in history. No one, I presume, wishes today to return to the precise program of critical and educational techniques of about 1900. But we must, I think, recover a more normal and reasonable philosophy of literary culture and education before marked progress in these realms is achieved. The meaning of these conclusions I can, I think, make clear in a very few minutes.

We all know that most English courses today consist of critical and historical commentary upon imaginative literature. We analyze, for example, the works of individual poets or schools of poets. The student may or may not write expository essays on the poets; he will probably

learn from his course something about writing an examination paper, if not about writing verse. The student is rarely encouraged to write poetry of any sort, lyric or dramatic. The study is almost wholly one of appreciation. Most composition courses include some reading in models of expository prose, but frequently such readings are little stressed. Probably not one student in ten is aided, encouraged, or trained in creative writing of any sort. The courses in poetry-writing are very few, although not quite so rare as they were a decade ago. And in such courses there is generally little systematic effort to co-ordinate the reading of masterpieces with the students' productions. Passivity is the rule; creative activity or craftsmanship, the exception. The temper of instruction is thus overwhelmingly to create readers, not writers; appreciation, not activity; passivity, not creativity; consumption, not production. But the classics must themselves grow paler as the creative spirit is itself allowed to atrophy. Generally without any clear realization of what has occurred, we find that literary education in the half-century that within a few days comes to its close has been signalized by a remarkable departure from all previous practice.

Certain underlying assumptions regarding the study of poetry and literature were dominant from the times of Aristotle to the close of the past century. During this long period the chief intellectual effort in literary studies was the attainment of a generally acceptable body of writing called "poetic" and "rhetoric." The approved critics did not occupy themselves primarily with detailed analysis of individual books or authors or with literary history or evolution. Their concern was with a general statement of the principles of imaginative or aesthetic language, which are illustrated

by the masters and which anyone must follow if he is to succeed as an artist. The major works were at the same time analytical treatises on the masters and in effect advice to all practitioners. In short, no real distinction existed between the study of literature and that of composition.

Several forces unhappily united to destroy this sensible way of thinking. Evolutionary thinking tended to discourage any conception of abiding standards and to stress a study of literary history as a record of restless change. Popular education turned away from the older type of critical volume stocked with allusions to the great writers of the past, partly because such allusions were no longer recognized by the lower middle class, which predominated in schools and colleges. It became clear, also, that the old classical rhetoric and prosody no longer satisfied modern aesthetic and linguistic needs. Finally, and most important, the philosophy of the new industrialism dominating the new culture was a consumer-oriented philosophy, which urged men to consume ready-made products and disparaged attention to the means and materials of production. Matthew Arnold as a critic became as bourgeois a salesman for the best that has been thought and said in the world as any traveling salesman in America marketing improved kitchenware. The public was discouraged from sharing in any way in aesthetic craftsmanship. It was to get its ready-made artifacts from the dictators who knew best, the lords, in turn, of press, film, radio, and television. A cultural totalitarianism stifled the individual will to share in any way whatsoever in the delights of production. Stars and stripes, hammer and sickle, alike surrendered to the philosophy of the tin can. Hence, in our colleges today the

overwhelming emphasis falls on the appreciation of poetry and not on its production or the means and techniques of production. To such a degree is this the case that we tend almost wholly to forget how radically different was the educational process seventy-five or even fifty years ago.

At that time "English" consisted almost entirely of the study of language, either as an art or as material for the semiscience of philology. There were very few courses in individual authors or in literary history. One studied "speech" as the art of reciting great oratory or great poetry and even as the art of writing orations in emulation of the masters. One studied "rhetoric" with copious references to Shakespeare, Jonson, Dryden, Pope, and the English poets generally; the student was clearly instructed that the same principles which made these men great would ennoble any successful composition which he might produce. There was, to repeat, no distinction between the study of literature and composition. Even the studies in philology, in the linguistics of *Beowulf*, Chaucer, or Shakespeare, were at least studies in the English language, its roots and its flowering, a study of that great tree of language upon which the student himself was properly regarded as a leaf or bud though not a full-blown flower. Eloquence was properly the possession of any leader in society, and only potential leaders of society enjoyed higher education. Verse was an elegant accomplishment and ornament, some proficiency in which was expected of every gentleman, just as every gentleman was expected at times to wear evening dress. Education in English was, then, in theory at least, dynamic, pragmatic, useful. The student was educated to give as well as to receive, to act as well as to enjoy.

During the last fifty years the philosophy of literary education has, at least in my opinion, entered into an unprecedented period that can only be deplored. It is true that many others have deplored it, too; but it is important for us as educators to note that the most conspicuous movement designed to remedy the defect, that of so-called "progressive education," has in respect to poetry and the other arts been even more reactionary than progressive, initiating remedies quite as embarrassing as the defects which they are designed to remove. John Dewey says art is experience, but I should rather call it hard work. In so far as our liberated education has turned away from outmoded conceptions of classical taste and has instructed us to adjust our art and poetry to the needs of our radically changing environment, it has in principle been wholly sound. But in so far as it has been thoroughly romantic, stressing the intuition of the writer or artist as against a disciplined mastery of his craft, urging him to create first the most difficult rather than the simplest type of composition, progressive education has been highly romantic and therefore to that degree reactionary. The unrealistic efforts of many of our educational reforms in behalf of the needs of the individual to create have thus been thwarted, not only by the sinister forces in society combating such reforms, in ways already outlined here, but because of the romantic philistinism of many of the reforms themselves.

The most valuable books and the most constructive movements brought to bear upon poetry on the eve of the new half-century have therefore been those which, while rejecting conformity to classical standards, nevertheless return to the normal and ancient principle of all literary study, the basic unity of "litera-

ture" and "composition." This is our need. What, then, are the books and studies contributing to it? None of the books, I think, mentioned at the beginning of this report contributes much of specific and imminent value in this regard. The rather numerous textbooks teaching expository writing by use of models are a gain; the defect is that these models, largely from current periodical writing, themselves often lack distinction. Poetry is only indirectly concerned. It is not surprising that Mr. Donald Davidson, being himself a poet, has compiled several texts representing the dynamic criticism and teaching which we so greatly need. Some of the critical anthologizing of Mr. Cleanth Brooks, with whose views in details I often disagree, in this paramount respect is equally constructive.

Again, the unique collection of materials for research on the creative process of poetry at the Lockwood Library in Buffalo, where thousands of manuscripts and worksheets are treasured, at least symbolizes an enormous spiritual and intellectual advance where the study and practice of poetry are concerned.

Throughout the country there are today more college courses in verse-writing than ever before. This is a gain, since there is a distinct possibility that these courses may in increasing measure assimilate purely literary studies. They will surely do so if they follow the counsel of the much-applauded William Butler Yeats, who writes:

Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence.

Nevertheless—though I have myself done some exploring in the field on a nation-wide basis—I have nothing at the

moment to report of a concerted movement in the poetry-writing classes to assimilate the work of the so-called "literary" courses. Our educational philosophy, founded on the doctrine of a divorce which in fact does not and cannot exist, presents a barrier against even the most well-meaning reformers. The position of the verse-writing courses is precarious enough as it is without trespassing upon, or in appearance reduplicating, work for which provision is made elsewhere in the curriculum.

The present schizophrenic theory prevailing in the teaching of the literature of poetry is, in my opinion, too eccentric to endure for long. It has not, I think, the remotest chance to survive the social revolution promised by the atomic age. The end of this century will, I am sure, find us in a position even more removed from that of 1950 than 1950 is from 1900. Basically, the current outlook is one of subservience of the individual and is markedly undemocratic, since it denies the individual even the humblest phases of creation. The best reason for designating the arts as "the humanities" is that *some* participation in them is to be expected of *all* mankind. If our democratic ideal is to be even partially realized, the practice of the teaching of poetry and the arts will certainly have to be revolutionized, for the old masters must in that event be not only our idols but our inspiration.

Yet, as already indicated, in the eminently real world of American college education today changes are occurring that promise considerable progress. This is seen in the relation of the study of the other arts to poetry. Schools of architecture have never felt the divorce between appreciation and creation felt in other fields, notably literature. Music demands

some escape from passivity, since the musician must at least perform even if he does not in the musical sense compose. And the revival of pre-Mozartian music, with its effect upon musical taste and style, today has almost without doubt been the brightest spot in the aesthetic achievement of the twentieth century. In our ever more popular art classes students are increasingly learning to use the masters, new and old, without subservience, at least to the old. We live in a most eclectic age. The last few years, in short, have witnessed a notable awakening in the general aesthetic life of our colleges and universities. This awakening to real vitality cannot fail to be felt as an awakening breath upon the studies of imaginative literature and poetry.

Another thoroughly wholesome and truly promising development has been the use of poetical texts in other departments than that of English. In departments variously entitled—where “humanities” appears to be the most favored term—great poems, especially dramatic, philosophical, epic, and narratory, and frequently read in translation, are studied primarily for their ideas, not for their aesthetic quality. This is as it should be and helps to clear the air in English departments, where presumably the first concern is the *art* of literature. The more the courses in “humanities,” “history,”

“philosophy,” etc., capture poetry for its purely intellectual or moral values, the more the department dedicated to the *art* of literature should become free to perform the function for which it is presumably designed. Also, the increasingly discerning and sophisticated studies in language and especially in semantics greatly aid studies in the language of poetry itself, which, after all, is the primary consideration of any soundly conceived discipline in poetry. Such a course has small occasion to study Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth, Blake, Yeats, Auden, or Dylan Thomas in themselves. The study of poetry is simply the study of poetry, what it is and how you write it. For this it is certainly necessary to read the great poets and to ponder their works. It is also necessary to write in the poetical laboratory of the people large quantities of amateurish verse.

The publications and researches of 1949 which are effecting this return to a normal philosophy and teaching of poetry are scattered and relatively inconspicuous when compared with the works in the familiar literary exegesis. But these publications and researches, not those books, will, if my judgment is correct, determine the course of the study of poetry during the coming half of the present century.

NCTE Meeting at Milwaukee

November 23-25

Have you made your reservation? For information see the advertisement on page viii.

The Teaching of Poetry-writing¹

JAMES R. CALDWELL²

I REGARD the place in the curriculum of the course in poetry-writing as anomalous and the place of the instructor in the course as minor; and I am vigorously opposed to the surrender of either.

There is in this view a degree of irrationality which troubles me and makes the subject difficult to talk about. I find it difficult also for another reason. I am not being politely modest when I say that there are persons not far from this spot better qualified to speak on this question than I am. I have in mind—to name one—a distinguished member of the Stanford faculty, Mr. Ivor Winters. My uneasiness at speaking on a topic to which he would bring certainly greater authority is not lessened by my sense that he would probably disagree with some of the things I have to say.

Moreover, in setting out to talk about the teaching of poetry-writing, one must seem to set himself up as a successful teacher of poets—obviously an arrogant stance. We are all familiar with the charge of pride and pretentiousness to which the teacher of anything to anybody is liable, and I suppose most of us guilty thereof in a cautious, tolerable degree. I remember hearing somewhere of “academic dignity.” Surely the teacher

of poetry-writing is very vulnerable at this point. The writing of a poem is an ambitious—even an unlikely—undertaking, and the teaching of poets to write is proportionally ambitious and unlikely. And, though I have already indicated that I would not magnify the place of the instructor, still “I am one who gathers samphire, fearful trade,” along with other teachers of poetry-writing. We may as well admit that we are in a steep place and that our necks are in a parlous state of exposure.

“Can you *really* teach people to write poetry?” The eternal question! Asked with all degrees of pity and terror. It annoys, of course; probably it is naïve; but who shall say that it is not a legitimate question? The asker senses, presumably, that there is a difference between the writing of a poem and the learning of a lesson in money and banking. If he is of a subtle turn, he senses also a difference between the writing of a poem and the critical appreciation of one; and if he is really knowing, he suspects a difference equally essential, although less patent, between the writing of a poem and the writing of a prose composition. “In prose,” as A.E. puts it, “there is the buffer of content; in poetry fundamentals and first principles must shine in the form.” Money and banking, critical appreciation, and even prose composition would seem to be susceptible of university disciplines. Poetry-writing is something else again.

One can, of course, minimize the peculiarity of the poetry-writing course and

¹ A talk delivered at the meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English at Stanford University, September 7, 1949.

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stress continuities and overlappings. Personally, I cannot accept this resort. I should not care to justify the course in poetry-writing as a means to sensible and practical and thus *non-poetic* ends: "appreciation" and accuracy in the use of language and memory. It may be true that trying to write poetry helps some individuals better to appreciate others' poetry. But I suspect, rather, that the practicing poet tends to be an imperfect reader. His approach to a poem is likely to be aggressive and acquisitive. He will rifle a poem for what he can find to his own purposes and leave it badly shaken up. It may be true also that poetry-writing, requiring, as it does, utter precision of language, can help the student to a nicer accuracy in his quiz answers or his advertising copy. But the matter precisely defined by a poet is of so special a sort that his precisions tend likewise to be special and are in truth sometimes mistaken for imprecisions. It may be true, as Stephen Spender says, that memory is the faculty of poetry, but the memory of lights and tensions is not the memory of formulas or of the terms of treaties. The faculty divides itself at this point and often goes to buffets.

I should include knowledge of the historical forms of verse as among the non-poetic ends by which some people would justify the course in poetry-writing:

Iambics march from short to long;—
With a leap and a bound the swift Anapaests
throng; . . .

I suppose there are not many teachers of poetic composition still persuaded that teaching the historic sorts and forms of verse is their main job. Peace to all such and envy of their innocent sleep. For the rest of us, "It is not rhyming and versing that maketh the poet." The formal problem is fundamental; one might say it is

the only problem, but always in relationship to what Herbert Read rather formidably calls "the inherent dynamism of the inventive act." Abstracted from this act, it may be the business of the metrist—it is none of the poet's. Indeed, I believe that the student who most derives from the poetry-writing course "appreciation," accuracy of expression, sharper memory, and knowledge of technical fact is the most melancholy failure in the proper purposes of the course.

Now, I am stressing the peculiarity of the course and the predicament of the instructor, not to aggrandize either, but as a matter of plain honesty. If we are teaching nothing beyond, or at least *other*, than appreciation, accuracy, technical facts, we are wasting college time, which, cheap as it comes, is still too dear to throw away. Either we differ in our professions, students, methods, from other courses, or we are flinching issues and duplicating the effort of others. I think we do differ radically. To specify is of course risky, but I think unavoidable, in terms of my assignment.

Our professions (*objectives*, if you please) are all in the superlative absolute. First principles and fundamentals! Rather! How to carry truth alive into the heart by passion; how to record best and happiest moments; how to produce a drainless shower of light; how to breathe the finer spirit of all knowledge; how to harmonize the sadness of the world. One could go on at some length. A trim reckoning for forty-five semester hours! Teaching this is what we must do, or (like Orlando) know not what to do; yet this we cannot do, do as we will. And if we could, where would it fit into the curriculum? What has the director of courses to do with harmonizing the sadness of the world?

Let us return to safe, at least defense-

less, ground—the student, *his* uniqueness. The student enrolling in the poetry-writing course differs, I think, from all other students, for he enters the class already charged with what he must regard as the essentials of his subject. These he is disposed to impart and not at all to accept. They are, of course, his own intuitions of experience, his own poetic visions. The fact that he considers himself a poet, if only in the egg, indicates that he has already, in the privacy of his soul, settled fundamental issues, become assured of certain certainties. He has, at least in a rudimentary way, experienced an intense kind of intuition which he calls “poetic.” He believes in it as an instrument for controlling his universe and feels in his blood that his experience has potential significance for others. His enrollment is testimony to these convictions. *These are the essentials of poetry-writing*; and they are infinitely personal, immediate, and reclusive. Where can they fit into the curriculum? Where in the conclave between the student-poet and psyche, his soul, can place be made for the Dean? Where, indeed, for the instructor? Surely the university world is properly the world of law and logic, the world of empirics; the course in poetry-writing, the world of passionate intuitions. In its vastness, its immediacy, its multiform privacies, it is a world recalcitrant to pedagogy.

Is it at all accessible via the classroom? We have rejected mere instruction in abstract techniques; our eyes dazzle before “poetry” considered in the absolute, and the young poet sits shrouded in the cloak of his own intuitions. Yet technique, essential poetry, and the student return upon our conscience with the inevitable gravity of the pendulum. They must be dealt with, never anatomized, yet explored, without constraint, with-

out oraculation or harsh invasion of privacies.

Now, it may be said that these words, in so far as they carry, describe merely the art and temper of the good teacher of any course. Certainly! Not poets merely, but even *teachers* of poets “shed no tears such as angels weep” and are—as Wordsworth might have agreed, had he thought about them—men talking to men. But I should like to go a step further. I should like to suggest a fairly specific concept of the course in poetry-writing and a specific area of investigation which seems to me to promise fruitful method and to assure pertinent subject matter. I propose that we flatly accept the student’s conviction that his own intuitions are the essential and peculiar matter of the course and that we accept as the proper area of study the region in which they occur. I mean, of course, his own unconscious, or, to speak by the card, preconscious, mind. Here, if anywhere, he will discover the immediacies and the immensities of the poetic process. In this region, vaster and richer than he himself usually suspects, will haunt such desires and adorations, winged persuasions and veiled destinies, as he is capable of; here the wisps of his old dreams, the distillations of his thought, and perhaps the archetypes of his race gather to articulate such universal truths as are given him to know.

I have certainly no ambition to add another to the innumerable definitions of poetry, but I believe that a number of things fall into focus for the young poet if his task in writing a poem is presented to him specifically as the communication *by design* of a state of consciousness. A state of consciousness I take to include rather more than simply a state of feeling, certainly more than simply a state of mind. And it involves no paradox

that the framing of these designs requires the deepest possible probing of the preconscious, even of the unconscious, mind. There is nothing new in this idea. "Go into yourself," writes Rilke to the young poet, "and test the deeps in which your life takes rise . . . try to bring up the sunken sensations of [the] far past. Your solitude will widen, and become a dusky dwelling by which the noise of others passes far away."

What about craftsmanship? "We cannot," writes C. Day Lewis, "farm out to the unconscious the labor of craftsmanship." Coming as it does from a poet, and a wise one, this remark puzzles me. We not only can, but all of us constantly do, farm out to the unconscious a great deal of this labor. The delegation of it can itself be made a matter of discipline. Worship of the buffer and file may easily become a Puritan heresy. Meanwhile, "Kubla Khan" stands as one of many testimonies that the very artifice of poetry can be effected even by the sleeping mind. We must urge the mind to those levels where form and content fuse, where the form and rhythm of the poem are the form and rhythm of consciousness at the moment of composition, complex and exact but self-imposed.

In fostering these designs the role of the instructor is obviously tentative. He is mainly a sounding board. In his happiest moments he may sense, more clearly than the writer, the latent destination of a poem and suggest more direct routes thereto. He serves as a qualified norm whereby the young poet may gauge his own communicativeness. If he "gets" the poem, the student knows that with one other consciousness he has succeeded. His failure to get it need not, on the other hand, be very significant. He will dogmatize at his own, and at the student's, peril. But he can be useful, also, in

another role, which approaches, although it must never be confused with, that of the psychiatrist. He can gently and sympathetically propel the student back and back into the recesses of his own mind, encourage and embolden him to explore the labyrinths of his memory and the springs of his desire.

The techniques of this propulsion will be the art of the teacher—and some of them are incommunicable. Others are ready enough in elementary psychology. Exercise in free association with words is among the most obvious. From one student of mine, the word *spark* elicited (with the co-operation of Hopkins) "fire-foals," "chestnutfalls filled brimful," and "frost." *Sparrow* brought "Sweeter than rhyme is the language of the Pascallian" (I did not press for the identity of the Pascallian). *Crime* gave "crime is not forethought of, but is fleshed there, fixed and hardened." *Down* produced "down into the mixture that is not mine nor thing." *Jump*, and a pneumatic hammer that began at this point its deviltry outside, gave "jump like Judy, the damned damned noise and sweetness of." *Apple* produced "apple fallen, the brown grass, forgotten the season of leave." A day or so of time intervened between these image clusters and the poet's discovery in them of his design. I think it was well invested. This eventuated:

CONCERNING POETRY

Enough—rhyme's sweetness
quicker than song
street-sparrows song, more unexpected
but brief lost to the ear
to touch lost to the eye
As an apple, overripe
falls into the high brown grass.

All speech is rough, a long
way around to home,
roughness of the tongue damned
damned troublesome word

lost to the ear the movement
of the whole thing
here for a moment lost

this . . .

a girl quickly/down the curved walk
reached
up into a blossoming tree
touching the leaves the livid
green—not sweetness
of rhyme but eloquent
speech.

A state of consciousness, communicated by design. A classroom exercise,

and a rather telling one, I should say, but I cannot find where to place it in the curriculum. It must, I am afraid, wait outside until on some enchanted evening the curriculum shall begin concerning *itself* with states of consciousness—heart-shaking speculation!

"Can you really teach poetry-writing?" The answer is the same that any sensible, honest teacher gives. "I have no way of telling. A few of them seem to do a little better at the end of the term than they did at the beginning."

Social Criticism as a Teaching Technique

LEONARD FEINBERG¹

ONE of the challenges which a teacher in a compulsory literature course faces is the students' hostility to poetry. There is a number of possible explanations for that hostility: the student may have been forced to memorize "classics" before he understood them; he may have resented the subject matter of the poetry he read in high school as effeminate or fantastic; or he may have decided that the themes of poetry are remote from his own personal existence. The student frequently fails to understand, as we teachers presumably do, that ethical and aesthetic values transcend such mundane and narrow considerations as any particular individual's social problems.

This selfish preoccupation with their personal material welfare is especially apparent among the older students, the veterans, the most mature members of our classes. To tell them that they should not be so self-centered is futile. The fact is that they are self-centered. They are

keenly interested in such things as their probable employment, their standard of living, their housing, and the likelihood of their going to war again. They have an intense suspicion that the essential problem in their lives is going to be earning a livelihood, and they are regrettably callous in consigning aesthetic and philosophic issues to secondary or tertiary positions in their scale of values. Most of them admit, I think, that man does not live by bread alone; but they regard as even more important the proposition that without bread man does not live at all.

The more mature students, then, are definitely aware of contemporary social problems. The oldest students and the married students tend to be really interested only in what is likely to give them personal profit or personal pleasure. The capacity for altruism and idealism seems to diminish rapidly in the mid-twenties and in marriage. Now whether we as teachers disapprove of this condition or

¹ Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa.

not, the important thing seems to me the fact that this condition exists. We have to recognize it and we have to devise a method to utilize it for socially desirable ends.

The college student is aware, in varying degrees of clarity, of a double standard in society. He knows that there is something of a gap between the ethics he is taught in his home and church and the ethics he sees practiced among the people with whom he associates and about whom he reads. He realizes that the theories of ethical conduct which he has been urged to follow are ignored or contradicted by many, often to the apparent prosperity of the transgressors. The student is honestly perplexed. To ignore this perplexity, or to pretend that it does not exist, is a somewhat naïve although popular pedagogical procedure.

Further, the college student is aware of the fact that learning is largely a process of finding out that things are not what they seem. Learning is a series of refutations of the notion that the superficial is the true. The growing boy is informed that the earth is not flat, in spite of superficial evidence to the contrary. At a later stage in his development he is informed that the earth is not the center of the universe, in spite of superficial evidence to the contrary. By the time he gets through college he should have been informed that statesmen have not always meant everything they said, in spite of superficial evidence to the contrary. To assume that the student's skepticism will be limited to assigned subjects in the classroom is a somewhat naïve although popular pedagogical procedure.

The mature college student reacts to the platitudes of Longfellow and Franklin's *Poor Richard* with an impermeable indifference. He rejects these platitudes not because they are untrue but because

he knows that they are not sufficient. The oversimplification of moral problems, the reduction of complex issues to such terms as leaving "footprints on the sands of time" and "the used Key is always bright" irritate him and make him contemptuous toward literature. He knows that these morals and maxims do deal truthfully with one aspect of life, and one only, of a number of unavoidable aspects. He wants to learn generalizations about life which not only sound pleasant but are also observable in and applicable to his own life. If literature offers him these generalizations, he is willing to listen and to evaluate. When a course in literature offers nothing but euphemisms and clichés, he stops paying attention to it.

We sometimes call our course "literature and life," and we justify the teaching of literature on the ground that it helps to explain and enrich our students' lives. Frequently, however, we limit ourselves to lives of the nineteenth century; and the social issues we explain are either so vague as to be irrelevant or so cagily specific as to announce that we, like the politician campaigning for election, are courageously opposed to evil. The accusation that teachers' attitudes on social issues are evasive is rather difficult to refute.

To compare the teacher with an ostrich is perhaps unfair to both. The ostrich has no degrees attesting to his knowledge, no titles implying his wisdom. When the ostrich is puzzled, he puts his head into the sand and keeps it there until the problem has disappeared or until it is too late to do anything about it. When the teacher is puzzled, he begins talking about universal truths and the inevitability of victory by some abstract right over some unidentified wrong; and so talking the teacher waits, more noisily

than the ostrich, until the problem has disappeared or until it is too late to do anything about it.

On an individual basis this ivory-tower isolationism of the teacher is defensible. In a democracy he has as much right to his own taste as the farmer who kissed the cow. But the teacher does not have the right to convey ivory-tower judgments to his students, most of whom will not live in ivory towers. The teacher ought to hesitate before assuming that the relative security of his own circumscribed and sheltered life extends to the futures, and sometimes the immediate presents, of his students. Life for most people is somewhat more competitive and insecure than it is for most teachers. We have no right to assume that, simply because we have chosen to exchange material comforts and adventure for the relative shelter of the academic life, our students also ought to make plans for similar existence. We are obligated to our students more seriously than, in our complacency, we think. We are often wasting time when we convey to them vague generalities about beauty and goodness at a time when they are living in barracks and Quonset huts, or are awaiting the draft, or are worrying about getting a job. There is no point in our ignoring these issues. The student does not ignore them; and, as long as we talk only about values which seem to him wholly irrelevant to his own immediate existence, he listens with either amused or angry disdain.

It seems to me, then, that the student is more mature and more materialistic than we usually credit him with being; and it seems to me that the teacher avoids the significant problems of contemporary life more than he ought to, in view of the fact that his students are now and will continue to be seriously affected by these problems. I suggest the need for

social criticism of literature for the undergraduate, in a world which is primarily interested in material social problems; in a world where there is a disturbing cultural lag between social science and physical science; in a world which, finally, needs the social criticism of intellectually trained college men as an antidote to the irresponsible social criticism of emotionally motivated demagogues.

Modern society is primarily concerned with material social problems. Whether this condition is healthy or dangerous I do not intend now to discuss. The indisputable fact is that the people of contemporary society, including our students, are interested in those aspects of society which affect their work, food, and security. Our dismissal of this interest does not eliminate it. The student simply looks for the answers elsewhere, to sources less reliable and less objective than we like to assume our colleges to be. Our students live in a world of atomic energy, potential war, inadequate housing, and high prices. Our students lack to a distressing degree the calm, rounded, and unselfish philosophy which may seem desirable to the academic mind. They, like Matthew Arnold, rarely see the world steady and see it whole. They are impatient and sometimes skeptical. They are somewhat interested in knowing why they are going to be drafted, or why they have to live in trailers, or why their living costs are as high as they are. If the literature they study seems to be wholly irrelevant to these interests, they pay no attention to that literature.

The existence of a cultural lag in contemporary society has been pointed out so often that it is platitudinous to mention it. Practically everyone admits that our scientific development has gone far ahead of our social progress. Our students are aware of it, and, while few of them

are ready to accept entirely Thoreau's suggestion that inventions are improved means to unimproved ends, they do feel a mild irritation with the gap between scientific progress and social discord. They recognize that the use of atomic energy has been limited to the atomic bomb, that the most likely location for a television set is a tavern, and that the most frequent evening program on television (in a city like Chicago, for instance) is a professional wrestling match. Our students may not be aware of the fact that society approves of experimentation in science and urges innovations in business, while it strongly disapproves of and discourages unorthodox speculation concerning social values. Sociologically, this disapproval is understandable. Every society wants to keep the status quo functioning with as few disruptions as possible. It is admittedly dangerous for a totalitarian society, whether Fascist or Communist, to permit free discussion of social problems. It is dangerous, I think, for a democracy *not* to permit such discussion.

Whether we like it or not, there has always existed social criticism within a society. There has been no utopia yet in which everyone was satisfied and no one complained. Free speech is presumably an inalienable right of the members of a democratic society. It seems foolish to reserve that right for the stupid or ignorant. It might be sensible to extend it to the educated. It might be wise to familiarize college students with social criticism while they are in an atmosphere which is fair enough to permit to some degree a rational analysis. It might be helpful to familiarize the student with some of the immense sources of valid social criticism which literature offers. If

the college graduates are not qualified to criticize society intelligently, who is?

I do not suggest that social consciousness is the only requisite for good literature. I do not even suggest that it is the most important one. It seems to me that literature which deliberately points morals, social or ethical, is likely to be poor literature. And writing which makes its point indirectly, by implication, is likely to be better writing. I do not suggest that the writer need necessarily even try to suggest the social issues of his time. If he is a good and honest writer, those social implications will appear in his work. I think they are most effective when they are least conscious. But because we are complex beings in a complex world, those implications are inescapable.

Nor do I suggest that social criticism is the only kind of valid literary criticism. I should especially hesitate to suggest that to teachers, for I have noticed that the general trend among teachers, as they grow more experienced or more proficient or simply older, is to have less and less personal interest in the social implications of literature. There is value in aesthetic criticism and there is value in ethical criticism. But for the student who is not quite sophisticated enough to appreciate the beautiful and not quite naïve enough to think that all problems can be solved by the good, social criticism is a means of arousing interest in literature. Social criticism can make him realize that literature can be relevant, that literature can be stimulating, and that literature can be useful.

When, consequently, he has developed a greater interest in literature, the student is in a better position to be taught that the other approaches to literature, the aesthetic and the philosophic, offer special satisfactions.

Current English Forum

HAROLD B. ALLEN, ADELINE C. BARTLETT, MARGARET M. BRYANT (*chairman*), ARCHIBALD A. HILL, JAMES B. MCMILLAN, KEMP MALONE, RUSSELL THOMAS

LIKE FOR

There is an interesting problem involved in considering the phrase *like for*, frequently used in the South, as in the sentence "We should like for you to give us this information." This construction is labeled incorrect and vulgar in studies of American usage; yet it has occurred in Standard English usage for many centuries and is paralleled in both the English and the American languages by similar constructions used with other verbs than *like*. That it does not occur in present-day Standard American usage is evidenced by the difficulty in finding examples of it in written documents other than those making use of the southern dialect. Why should this particular expression *like for* be considered unacceptable?

H. L. Mencken, with characteristic exaggeration, writes that "the long-awaited grammarian of the vulgar American when he spits on his hands at last, will have a gaudy time anatomizing such forms as: *I'd like for him to go there*."¹ Wentworth, in his *American Dialect Dictionary*, objects to the phrase *like for* because it is redundant. Leonard in *Current English Usage* records that nineteen out of twenty judges in all groups rated the parallel expression, "I want for you to come," as illiterate. He does comment, however, that "it is . . . in cultivated use in the South of the U.S. This would seem to indicate that in the estimation of the judges, dialect usages are generally equivalent to illiterate."² The objection to this expression, then, rests on the belief that it is redundant and that it is regional.

¹ H. L. Mencken, *The American Language, Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1948), p. 394.

² S. A. Leonard, *Current English Usage* ("English Monographs," No. 1 [Chicago: Inland Press, NCTE, 1935]), p. 124.

I believe that the charge of redundancy arises from a confusion as to the meaning of the preposition *for* as used in this construction. If the word *for* is interpreted as meaning "in favor of," "in order to please," it might be said to express a meaning implicit in the verbs *like* and *want*. However, when *for* is used after verbs "which may also have a simple object, it generally means: 'with a view to obtain.'"³

Grammatically, there are two explanations of the function of *for* in this construction.

Kellner, Curme, Poutsma, and Kruisinga seem to feel that the preposition *for* in the following sentences is to be explained as introducing the subject of the infinitive⁴—that is, the phrases *for the boys*, *for you*, *for it* are noun phrases, subjects of the infinitives *to use*, *to go*, *to lunch*, *to be*, all of which serve as objects of the finite verbs of the sentences:

I wouldn't like for the boys to use that saw. I would like for you to go home with me. Mrs. Roosevelt would like for you to lunch at the White House today. When I hear a trial, I like for it to be one.⁵

This use of the preposition *for* to introduce the subject of an infinitive occurs in literary English as early as 1474. The construction in Caxton's *Game of the Chesse*—"It is an evil thing for a man to have suspicion"—seems an obvious progenitor of

³ Otto Jespersen, *A Modern English Grammar* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1937), Part III, §13.21.

⁴ George O. Curme, *Syntax* (New York: D. C. Heath & Co., 1931), p. 250. See also H. Poutsma, *A Grammar of Late Modern English* (Groningen: P. Noordhoff, 1926), p. 778; E. Kruisinga, *A Handbook of Present Day English* (4th ed.; Utrecht: Kemink en Zoon, 1925), Part II, §§379, 382, 383.

⁵ Harold Wentworth, *American Dialect Dictionary* (New York: Crowell, 1944).

those cited above. Shakespeare's lines from *Coriolanus*—"For Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or hate him manifests the true knowledge he has"—and Swift's "The Lilliputians think nothing can be more unjust than for people . . . to bring children into the world, and leave the burden of supporting them upon the public" illustrate the use of a noun phrase as a subject of an infinitive which is used substantively.⁶

In the construction that is considered here, however, the infinitive is always object of the verb. It is a construction that occurs rather frequently in literary English with such verbs as *wish*, *desire*, *ask*, *do*, *care*, *hope*, *beg*, etc., and on the colloquial level with the verbs *want* and *like*. As Curme states, the use of the phrase as subject of the infinitive frequently gives an individual the opportunity of making a nice distinction in meaning, as in "I planned to go" but "I planned for him to go."⁷

Historical development, therefore, would lead one to analyze the modern expression "But you'd like better for us both to stay at home together" as: *for us both*, noun phrase, subject of the infinitive *to stay*.

However, as Dr. Margaret Bryant suggests, there is another and even simpler analysis of such expressions. Here, again, *for* is to be considered a preposition, one that introduces a verbid clause—that is, the infinitive with its subject and its modifiers is the object of the preposition, and the whole phrase, as above, *for both of us to stay at home together*, is object of the verb *like*.

The charge of redundancy arises only when—as pointed out above—this phrase introduced by *for* follows the verbs *like* and *want*, when the word *for* becomes ambiguous in meaning. But this ambiguity apparently

has been strong enough to influence usage and to keep the phrase *like for* pretty generally out of literary English.

The objection to *like for* on the ground that it is a dialect or regional form, however, rests on a less logical basis. In the first place, it is the habitual idiom of the South and is found not only in colloquial usage but also in the written usage of school superintendents, of authors like Margaret Mitchell and L. Jamieson, and in newspaper articles.⁸ Furthermore, on the colloquial level the phrase is not limited to the South but has also been heard in twenty-seven states and in Canada, specifically: Alberta, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Nova Scotia, Oklahoma, Ontario, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming. Dunlap even goes so far as to wonder "if we are dealing here not so much with a colloquialism as with an idiom of standard speech."⁹

With regard to the general construction—the use of the preposition *for* to introduce a verbid clause as object of a finite verb—I would have to agree with Dunlap. However, the forces that govern usage are strange, and the fact that the phrase *like for* has been generally considered a southern dialect form and the fact that *for* in combination with the verbs *like* and *want* can be ambiguous and give rise to the charge of redundancy have been strong enough to keep the construction on the colloquial level, except in the South.

GLADYS D. HAASE

BROOKLYN COLLEGE

⁶ Leon Kellner, *Historical Outlines of English Syntax* (London: Macmillan, 1892), §71.

⁷ Curme, *loc. cit.*

⁸ Wentworth, *op. cit.*; and A. R. Dunlap, "Observations on American Colloquial Idiom," *American Speech*, XX, No. 1 (February, 1945), 18-19.

⁹ Dunlap, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

Round Table

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION¹

I. COMPOSITION

"In view of the fact that the traditional freshman course in English is under attack, what will we do? Give up to the Department of Education people? Or to the teachers of speech, or of journalism? Or hold doggedly to old practices until the bankruptcy of our practice is evident even to us? What, for example, about the emphasis on grammatical 'errors' that everybody, even the best writers and speakers, use? Shall we continue to waste time trying to eradicate particular 'faulty' expressions? Why is misspelling so prevalent, and what can be done about it? What is a common-sense way to treat punctuation? Is theme-writing yielding commendable results, and if not, why not?

"To what extent are faulty reading habits responsible for poor results in composition? What is the best way of handling the selections used for reading? What is 'remedial English,' and how should it be managed? How prevent it from becoming a 'dumping-ground' for techniques and skills that should have been the student's equipment before entering college?

"What ways are there for checking later our work in Freshman English, and what do these checks show is needed? Should credit given for first-year English be removed if subsequent faulty habits in English are not eliminated? When should placement tests be used? How should students be sectioned? Under what conditions, promoted? What damage has the continued use of objective tests in high school and college done to abil-

ity in self-expression? What can be done about transfer students who have studied grammar and sentence exercises, without writing themes? What can be done to set standards of accomplishment through high school and all the way through college? Would it help to have all colleges get together and report to high schools annually on the nature of English failures by their graduates?"

II. LITERATURE

"What is the substance of the literature course? Is it biographical gossip? ethics? provenience? dialectic? literary mechanics? social history? or what? Is there a different approach for English majors and for those taking the general education program? Or do we teach as though most of our students are expected to become professors of English? Are ideas to be stressed, or techniques? Is a types course justifiable? Or should we concentrate on major authors? On masterpieces? Is the survey overcrowded? Is it suitable for sophomores, or should it be reserved for seniors? Does it matter *what* a student reads? What faulty reading habits can be changed? How can speed of reading be improved? What specific audio-visual aids are helpful in the teaching of literature? How should lecture and discussion methods be used? What should a student be expected to know about mythology? How can we reduce the ego of students that scorn the wisdom of the past? What do experiments with contemporary literature reveal? What good methods relate the literature of the past to conditions of the present? What types of term papers should be required in literature courses? What can be done to encourage discriminating reading throughout adulthood?"

ERNEST E. LEISY

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

¹ Prepared by Professor Leisy (program chairman) to stimulate discussion at the Texas Conference of College Teachers of English held last spring at Abilene. Copies of the questions were sent out *in advance*, and Professor Leisy reports the procedure as most helpful.

MOTIVATING FRESHMAN COM-
POSITION: THE FRESHMAN
MAGAZINE

In September of 1940 there were six freshman sections of twenty to twenty-five students each at Converse College, and the required two-semester composition course was the standard, uninspiring, theme-a-week, grammar-through-research-paper grind that students endure principally because there is no other pathway to sophomoredom. That fall Miss Elizabeth S. Bearden, as director of freshman composition, introduced a system that, to my knowledge, is unique, is firmly established on sound psychological principles, has elicited ever increasing interest and support from the freshmen, and has produced an amazing number of prize-winning essays and stories.

Each section meets the usual three times a week, the first meeting being devoted to assignments from a composition text, the second to students' reading aloud the weekly themes with no comments or interference from either class or teacher, the third to analysis and discussion of one or more pieces from the *Atlantic Monthly*, to which all students subscribe for nine months. In short, the content of the course in no way distinguishes it.

But "We the Freshmen," the class magazine, does. After the girls have been in school for three or four weeks, each instructor carefully explains to his sections the nature and workings of "We the Freshmen" and has them, by secret ballot, elect one of their number to the editorial board of this publication. The girls, having been advised that they are not electing a May Queen, invariably elect a student whose papers have impressed them and whose judgment they respect.

From the elections until May, this editorial board of six students, one from each composition section, meets every Thursday afternoon to read and vote on the essays and stories submitted to them by composition teachers—it being naturally assumed that

all of the best, and many of the mediocre, themes will get to the board, since all that instructors have to do is give their papers to the class representatives. The board lists each submitted paper by title, reads it closely, votes "yes" or "no" to show approval or disapproval for publication. All papers receiving a simple majority of "yesses" are typed and presented to Miss Bearden, the rejects being returned to the instructors who submitted them.

Thereafter, three times a year (late in fall, winter, and spring), Miss Bearden asks some competent judge to read the material collected to that date and to select the best items for inclusion in the forthcoming issue of "We the Freshmen." The English department proofreads the selected material, the editorial board prepares a table of contents and elects one of the editors to write a preface, local printers mimeograph and attractively bind the results in magazine form, and every freshman in school gets a copy. In May, Miss Bearden sends the three magazines to an eminent writer or teacher who picks what are, in his opinion, the two best pieces of writing in the year's collections; the winners receive awards at commencement.

As a stimulus to better freshmen themes, this approach has definite psychological appeal to students. The overwhelming majority of freshmen in American colleges and universities write merely for one instructor to read and grade and return their papers, and they are not going to exert themselves to do their best work unless they are most exceptional youngsters. When the Converse freshmen write their themes, they know beforehand that they are performing for highly critical listeners, their own classmates. And they write accordingly. Any teacher who begrudges devoting one hour a week to having his students read their papers aloud should try the experiment a few times. If Converse girls are any criterion, the maturity, form, content, and general interest of the themes will improve geometrically.

The other basic appeal lies in each freshman's certainty that about seventy-five pieces of classroom writing are going to be

printed during the year, that good writing is the only prerequisite, and that her classmates do the selecting. There seems to be an almost universal respect for the printed word as such, and "We the Freshmen" taps that deeply rooted feeling. Students never know until the issue appears just which selections are included, and they await—then read and discuss—their own publication with excitement. They derive a healthy pleasure from seeing their themes in black and white and from speculating on who might win the final prizes. This reverence for print, combined with the spirit of competition, may not be the noblest reason for improving one's writing or the most laudable student characteristic for a teacher to exploit, but it produces highly desirable results.

Miss Bearden's students alone have achieved several noteworthy distinctions; all the writers have been freshmen; all the work has been submitted as regular classroom assignments. What makes the record most unusual is that these honors have been won in competition with both men and women students in all age groups and on all undergraduate levels, despite the Converse freshman's average age of eighteen and her intellectual "normalcy" (psychological test scores of entering freshmen for several years show Converse girls to be always very slightly above or below the national average). Converse gets no better students now than

she did before the advent of Miss Bearden's "We the Freshmen." Briefly, these are some of the distinctions: in *Atlantic Monthly* National College Contests for 1944, first prize for short story, third honorable mention in essay, one merit award in essay, and in 1948 another merit award in essay; South Carolina College Press Association prizes (during seven years), these firsts: short story in 1941, sketch in 1942, short story in 1944, essay in 1947. In the annual contests of the Converse publications, freshmen have won an average of slightly more than one prize a year since 1940—highly unorthodox on any American college campus, where freshmen are traditionally to be seen and not heard.

This would be an excellent record for any teacher of creative writing; it is far more impressive as work done in freshman composition. And the most important results are beyond tabulation—hundreds of freshmen who have won no awards have nonetheless vastly improved in self-expression, in the ability to understand and appreciate good writing, in the spiritual growth, imponderable though it is, that every liberal-arts college theoretically nourishes. To date, "We the Freshmen" has produced no Katherine Mansfield; it has produced dozens of excellent freshmen themes—and that is its purpose.

EDGAR E. STANTON, JR.

CONVERSE COLLEGE
SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

College Literary Magazine

A good cover, dignified; a title made of a dream and a sensitive aim; wood cut, table of contents: fiction, essay, verse. The same

perennial of growth and flowering as the seasons' yield. One terse story beaten out of an assignment and a night at Elsinore; one verse

nostalgic (Spring issue) and another bald and definite as a geometric core plucked from some disquieting beachhead where grief and wisdom held the shore.

There is in this a curious revelation: *Report on the Current Year* in words other than those spoken to the trustees, or by a girl chatting with her mother.

SISTER M. MAURA, S.S.N.D.

COLLEGE OF NOTRE DAME OF MARYLAND
BALTIMORE

NCTE News

THE ELECTION OF THE COLLEGE Section of the National Council of Teachers of English was conducted by mail in May. A dual slate of nominations had been presented by a committee elected at the meeting of the section last Thanksgiving and published in February, to give opportunity for other nominations. The members of the Nominating Committee were Roy Basler, Lincoln Foundation, *chairman*; Katherine Porter, Western Reserve; and S. I. Hayakawa, editor of *Etc.* The new members of the Board of Directors start their service at the beginning of the Milwaukee convention next month; the members of the Section Committee at the close of that convention.

New Section Chairman: Theodore Hornberger (elected by the Section Committee to succeed Margaret Bryant, Brooklyn College; to serve two years).

New Members of the Section Committee: Samuel Weingarten, Wright Junior College, Chicago; Doris B. Garey, Fisk University.

Hold-over Members: Walter Blair, University of Chicago; James F. Fullington, Ohio State University; Theodore Hornberger, University of Minnesota; James B. McMillan, University of Alabama; George B. Parks, Queens College.

New Section Members of the Board of Directors: Bradford A. Booth, University of California at Los Angeles; James M. McCrimmon, University of Illinois.

A SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE ON the Teaching of English was held at Atlanta University, June 30 and July 1. The NCTE is unable at the present time to hold a national convention or a regional meeting in this area, and so a volunteer committee proposed this conference and asked both NCTE and the General Education Board to contribute to the expense. Both organizations

granted the request, and the Advisory Committee arranged a conference open to all interested persons. The registration of 167 showed representatives from all levels and kinds of schools and colleges in eight southeastern states.

The general topic, "Exploring the Language Arts," was remarkably well covered in the seven addresses at the three general sessions and the two afternoons devoted to discussion groups. The speakers and leaders of discussion groups were Angela M. Broening, W. Wilbur Hatfield, Nellie Appy Murphy, Thomas Clark Pollock, Robert C. Pooley, and Lynette Saine. The audiences were attentive and applauded generously.

The Advisory Committee members were: Paul Farmer, chairman, Henry Grady High School, Atlanta; W. Edward Farrison, North Carolina State College, Durham; William Hubert, Benedict College (S.C.); Thomas D. Jarrett, Atlanta University; E. Paul Jones, Jefferson County Board of Education, Birmingham; Crawford Lindsay, Tennessee A. and I. College; James Mason, Arkansas State University; Douglas G. MacRae, Fulton County Board of Education, Atlanta; Nathan A. Miller, Little River Junior High School, Miami; Glenn Rainey, Georgia School of Technology; N. P. Tillman, Atlanta University; Kate V. Wofford, University of Florida. The Committee on Arrangements were the following members of the faculties of the several colleges of Atlanta University: N. P. Tillman, chairman; Lucy C. Grigsby, co-chairman; M. R. Austell, Stella B. Brooks, A. R. Brooks, G. L. Chandler, Helen Coulborn, Thelma Curl, Charles Curl, Victoria Johnson, Beulah Jones, Henry Thomas, Darwin Turner, E. H. Lawson.

Fortieth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English

Municipal Auditorium, Milwaukee

November 21-25, 1950

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CONVENTION THEME: *THE WORK IS PLAY FOR MORTAL STAKES*

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PROGRAM

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23

CONTINUOUS EXHIBIT OF MATERIALS AND AIDS FOR TEACHING

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 9:30 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

(All members of the Council are invited to attend as auditors)

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, 3:15-4:15 P.M.

(All members of the Council participate in this meeting)

RECEPTION FOR MEMBERS, 4:30-5:30 P.M.

GENERAL SESSION, 8:00-10:00 P.M.

Presiding, Paul Farmer, Atlanta, Georgia, High Schools; First Vice-President of the Council

Invocation—Rev. E. J. O'Donnell, S.J., President of Marquette University

Welcome—Harold S. Vincent, Superintendent of Schools, Milwaukee

President's Address: "For Mortal Stakes"—Mark Neville, John Burroughs School, St. Louis

The Teacher of English in the Modern World—Max J. Herzberg, Weequahic High School, Newark; the *Newark News*; Council Director of Production of Oral and Visual Materials

Implementing the Curriculum Commission Report in the Local Program of Curriculum Revision—Dora V. Smith, University of Minnesota; Director of the Commission on the English Curriculum

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24

LARGE-GROUP MEETINGS, 9:45-11:45 A.M.

General Topic: THE WAYS LANGUAGE IS LEARNED AND USED: PRESENTING THE PHILOSOPHY AND POINT OF VIEW

Group I. THE LEARNER

What Do We Know about the Ways of Learning?

Presiding, Thomas C. Pollock, New York University

Basic Factors of Growth and Development—William E. Martin, University of Illinois

Using What Is Known about Growth and Development To Help Young People Learn and Live Together—Robert J. Havighurst, University of Chicago

The Role of Reading and Literature in the Development of Sensitivity—Lou LaBrant,
New York University

Group II. THE LEARNING

What Do We Know about Principles of Learning and Measurement?

Presiding, Robert C. Pooley, University of Wisconsin

Structural Linguistics and Language Learning—Charles C. Fries, University of Michigan
Language Learning Adapted to Learning Pace—Mildred M. Dawson, State Teachers College,
Fredonia, New York

Evaluation of Recent Practices in the Measurement of the Use of Language—Angela
Broening, Baltimore Public Schools

Group III. THE USE OF LANGUAGE

How Is Language Used in a Democratic Society?

Presiding, John J. DeBoer, University of Illinois

The Meaning of Democracy in America Today—A. John Bartky, Stanford University

Democratic Living in the School—Marion Edman, Wayne University

Human Relations Now—Walter Loban, University of California, Berkeley

LUNCHEON SESSIONS, 12:00

*Annual Business Meeting of the Conference on College Composition
and Communication*

Presiding, John C. Gerber, Iowa State University, President, CCCC

FRIDAY AFTERNOON CONFERENCES

The Friday afternoon sessions will be divided into two series. The first (2:15-3:30 P.M.) will have for its general topic "The Ways Language Is Learned and Used: Analyzing Situations and Problems." Sectional meetings will be held on such topics as "Becoming Good Group Members," "Developing an Evaluation Program for Language," and "Developing Personality through Books." The one of most interest to college teachers will be on:

Teaching World Literature at the College Level

(Planned by Committee on Comparative Literature, Horst Frenz, *Chairman*)

Chairman, Horst Frenz, University of Indiana

Speakers:

King Hendricks, Utah State Agricultural College

Paul Landis, University of Illinois

Fred Millett, Wesleyan University

Discussion Leaders:

John W. Ashton, Indiana University

Martin S. Shockley, North Texas State Teachers College

Professor Charles H. Foster, Grinnell College

The Reverend Paul F. Smith, Omaha

The second series (3:45-5:00 P.M.) will have to do with "The Ways Language Is Learned and Used: Considering Adaptations and Solutions." Sectional meetings will include the topics, "The New Teacher in the Community—What I Was Unprepared For!" "What

Constitutes Wise Use of Textbooks?" "What Is the Relation of Grammar to Effective Expression?" "What Are the Functions of Affiliate Organizations of the NCTE?" "What Kind of Training Do Teachers of English Need?" The meetings in this second series will all be discussion meetings, the one designed particularly for college teachers on:

What Are the Responsibilities of Colleges for the Humanities?

Chairman: Porter G. Perrin, University of Washington

Discussion Leaders:

Arthur Mizener, Carleton College
Tremaine McDowell, University of Minnesota
Ruth Slonim, Washington State College
Samuel Weingarten, Wright Junior College, Chicago
Frederick R. White, Beloit College
J. P. Brawner, University of West Virginia
Robert Davidson, University of Florida

ANNUAL DINNER, 6:30 P.M.

Toastmaster, Irvin C. Poley, Germantown Friends School, Philadelphia

Double Vision—Katherine Anne Porter, author of *Flowering Judas*, *Pale Horse Pale Rider*, etc.

The Anglo-American Folk Ballad and Carol—John Jacob Niles, assisted by Thomas Niles (age eleven)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25

Elementary, high school, and college sectional meetings will be held 9:30-11:30 A.M. The program for the College Section follows:

Topic: WORLD LITERATURE IN THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

Presiding, Theodore Hornberger, University of Minnesota, Chairman-elect of the College Section

Secretary, James F. Fullington, Ohio State University

Comparative Literature and World Literature—Horst Frenz, Indiana University; Chairman of the Committee on Comparative Literature, NCTE

The Integration of World Literature with Composition—Agnès Berrigan, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College

The Integration of World Literature with Art—Ernest C. Hassold, University of Louisville; Member of Committee on Comparative Literature

Questions and Comments from the Floor

Section Business Session

ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 12:15 P.M.

Presiding, Mark Neville, President of the Council

Selections—A Capella Choir—High School, Milwaukee

Presentation of Radio Awards—Leon C. Hood, Clifford J. Scott High School, East Orange, New Jersey; Chairman of the Committee on Radio

Mid-century Revolt in American Poetry—Peter Viereck, Mt. Holyoke College; author of *Terror and Decorum* (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1949)

What Can an American Believe?—John R. Tunis, author of *All-American*, *The Duke Decides*, etc.

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 4:00-6:00 AND 8:00-10:00 P.M.

Report and Summary

About Literature

JAMES T. FARRELL DEALS WITH the problem of "Naturalism, So Called, in Fiction" in the summer *Antioch Review*. After analyzing in some detail Zola's theory of naturalism, he then uses it as a springboard to plunge into the deep waters of such questions as: "Just what has the problem of free will versus determinism to do with literature?" "How will the assumption that man has free will make someone a better writer?" He disposes of the contemporary criticism which is based on the Aristotelian conception of tragedy, by discussing the fact that we live in a different society and a different mental climate from that of Aristotle and that we assume that social forces, social factors, and social pressures and tendencies play a role similar to that played by the gods, by Fate, and by Nemesis in ancient Greece. He quotes several of the many contemporary definitions of naturalism to show how diverse are the interpretations; and then he defines his own conception of it as "whatever happens in this world must ultimately be explainable in terms of events in this world." He then goes on to say that he believes that all events are explainable in terms of natural origins rather than extranatural or supernatural origins and that, although this assumption underlies what he has written, he does not write novels to prove or disprove that assumption. "I write novels," he says, "in order to try to reveal what life seems to me to be like, as part of an attempt to explore the nature of experience." Farrell thinks that in the long run the link which binds together the many writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries whose strikingly dissimilar works have been written in the naturalistic tradition is their common effort to come to terms with experience. It is they, he says, who have con-

stantly had to bear the brunt of the struggle for freedom of literary expression, and he believes that the consequences of the best work in this tradition have been an increase in feeling and a desire for more freedom, more frankness, and more understanding in the world.

"'EXISTENCE' AS UNDERSTOOD BY Kierkegaard and/or Sartre," by Walter Lowrie in the summer *Sewanee Review*, goes a long way toward clarifying the question as to how much Jean Paul Sartre's atheistic existentialism is related to Kierkegaard's theism. Lowrie, who is a theologian and a translator of Kierkegaard, says that Kierkegaard *never* used the word "existentialism" because he was not engaged in formulating a new philosophy or a new "ism" but merely protesting against the prevailing system of idealistic philosophy, "which soared serenely above the concrete realities of human life." He states that no passage can be found in Sartre's work which explains what Sartre means by "existence" but that there are many in Kierkegaard's to show what *he* means. Lowrie quotes and analyzes thirteen of these and then summarizes Kierkegaard's ideas somewhat as follows: Kierkegaard's emphasis on existence, he says, does not imply a new metaphysical philosophy but is a protest against every sort of speculation that man is more than a thinker; Kierkegaard stresses the importance which the individual must have for himself and stresses that man is always in a process of *becoming*, not like a plant but by deliberate choice; because man is a synthesis of spirit and body, his striving is a passionate tension which involves suffering, and this striving after a high aim involves ethics; but ethics cannot stand on its own feet, and the ultimate aim

—the expectation of eternal blessedness—is a religious aim; the individual exists in the highest sense “only when he is grounded transparently in God.” Sartre, says Lowrie, not only has not explained what *he* means by existence but has not evolved an ethic, “and his dependence on Kierkegaard amounts only to this, that he attributes to man universally experiences which are characteristic only of the atheistic stage.”

A NOTABLE EXHIBITION FROM THE Theatre Collection of the late George C. D. Odell will be on view at the Brander Matthews Dramatic Museum, Columbia University, until the end of the year. Professor Odell willed the museum about twenty-five thousand theatrical pictures and a similar number of programs, chiefly illustrating the American stage.

THE FIRST ANNUAL PUBLICATION of the Society for Theatre Research is the recently issued *The Theatre of the British Isles: Excluding London*. This is a bibliography of source materials compiled by the late Alfred Loewenberg, beautifully edited and well printed. It is an invaluable handbook for all interested in theatre research.

TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS is being offered for the writing of a novel “of perception and depth which creatively portrays the growing-up experiences of the youth of our generation” by the J. P. Lippincott Company and the publishers of the magazine *Seventeen*. A lesser prize is offered for a partially completed manuscript. The winning novel, which must be submitted by March 1, 1951, will be serialized by the magazine as well as published as a book. Further details may be obtained from Lippincott at East Washington Square, Philadelphia 5, Pennsylvania.

THAT INTEREST IN POETRY IS BE- coming more general must be the conviction of the editors of *Harper's Bazaar*. The August issue carries an article on “The Poets,” by Lloyd Frankenburg, editor of

the *Pleasure Dome* anthology and recordings. He emphasizes, of course, the oral nature of poetry. To teachers the article will be useful chiefly for good pictures of ten of the prominent poets of today.

And the leading article in *Flair* for August is “Revolution on Campus,” by Paul Engle. The poet-novelist-juvenile-writer teaches writing at the State University of Iowa, one of the few institutions where one may take a graduate degree in that phase of English. He agrees with Wallace Stegner (see Stegner's article in the *English Journal* for January, 1949) that young writers are congregating in university centers, and adds that more and more of the established authors are becoming university teachers. Unlike Stegner, he thinks this is almost *entirely* a gain to literature.

THE POETRY OF CARL SANDBURG is reappraised by Dan G. Hoffman in the summer *Antioch Review*. He states that Sandburg still has a following but that it no longer numbers many of modern poetry's serious readers. In examining the reasons for Sandburg's present eclipse, Hoffman analyzes in particular *The People*, *Yes* and discusses such questions as the following: Is the descent of Sandburg's reputation caused solely by the New Critics' preference for intensity, form, and intellectualized content? Why is it that, while everyone concedes him to be a pioneer in communal expression, so few have followed his lead with any success? Is the program to which he has dedicated his career as a poet an impossible basis for art? Hoffman finds that there is more form in Sandburg's verse than meets the eye but that his art has two endemic weaknesses: his poetic language and his social thinking. The ultimate distinction between poetic and prosaic diction, Hoffman remarks, is one of intensity, and it is here that Sandburg fails. “His ‘people’ are a hive of bees who hum snatches of human speech.” He has tried to record the emotions of a society instead of an individual and “the people” remain a “faceless abstraction.” Nevertheless, he thinks, *The*

People, Yes "billows with an imagination widely informed and widely curious which gives it a life within itself," and in this is Sandburg's strength. Although in presenting collective emotions divorced from individual consciousness Sandburg may have set himself an impossible task, Hoffman concludes that he still has much to teach today's poets "of the imaginative possession of the American past" and "of the sensitive observation of the American scene today."

THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA IS CELEBRATING the centenary of its founding. As part of the observance it commissioned an American Negro poet, M. B. Tolson, to write an ode. This turns out to be English Pindaric but has much greater vitality than most official odes. In fact, it is exciting. A portion of it is published in the July *Poetry*, and the whole will shortly be issued by the Decker Press under the title "Libretto for the Republic of Liberia."

THE WORDSWORTH CENTENARY has produced a considerable crop of critical exegeses. Two very dissimilar articles appear in the summer *Kenyon Review*, where Lionel Trilling discusses "Wordsworth and the Iron Time" and John Crowe Ransom "William Wordsworth: Notes toward an Understanding of Poetry." (In the autumn, Herbert Read is scheduled to contribute an essay on "Wordsworth's Philosophical Faith.") Ransom discusses Wordsworth's innovations in theory and illustrates by analyzing a number of the poems. Trilling is concerned with the reasons for the contemporary opinion of Wordsworth and with determining how far these are justified. He remarks that neither the literary man outside the university nor the ordinary reader today thinks of Wordsworth as important. The predilection which makes it impossible for most readers to accept Wordsworth he finds to be "the predilection for the powerful, the fierce, the assertive, the personally heroic." This is not a new inclination of man! Actually, as he points out, Wordsworth was a founding father of the move-

ment toward a secular exploration of the spirit, and "he initiated the attack on the problem which has involved the energies of modern literature, the problem of affectlessness, of loss of feeling and of humanness, under which we subsume all the details of our modern spiritual plight."

A. M. KLEIN CONTRIBUTES AN interesting study of the technique of James Joyce to the spring issue of *Accent*. His essay, entitled "The Black Panther," is limited to the first chapter of *Ulysses*, through the subterranean references of which he takes us to show that its basic structure is that of the Ordinary and Proper of the mass and that Joyce observes the order of the mass with precision and in sequence. It is also a study of Joyce's images, one of which, the black panther, Klein identifies (as the old bestiaries have it) as a symbol of Christ.

"THE PEDAGOGICAL PRESS IN GERMANY" is described in the summer Delta Kappa Gamma *Bulletin* by Andreas Voelker, editor of *Die pädagogischen Arbeitsblätter*, the largest periodical of this type (circulation 12,000), published at Stuttgart by the Education Service Center and distributed to schools and teachers without cost. He reports that, as the four occupying forces—The United States, England, France, and Russia—each have a specific educational program, the professional publications reflect the tendencies of their particular sector. In the American and British zones the press is much less restricted than in the French and Russian. In the Russian zone there is only one magazine for each different type of school, and this is published by the state-owned publishing house and expresses the official tendencies in the educational field; officially the people are not permitted to read any of the sixty-four educational magazines published in the western zone. Teacher associations have begun anew; there are fourteen in the western zone, and eight of them issue a

newspaper. In the Russian zone all teachers are organized into one association with one journal.

THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS recently polled two hundred teachers, librarians, editors, and booksellers, asking them to name the ten classics "which have bored the most people the most." The ten "winning" books were Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, Richardson's *Pamela*, Eliot's *Silas Marner*, Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and Goethe's *Faust*. Since all these are still required reading for a good many students, the judgments thus rendered might well raise a few questions in the minds of curriculum-makers.

PRESS AND FILM SUBSIDIES TOTALING more than \$600,000 are reported by the press to have been paid under the Marshall Plan to American newspaper, magazine, and book publishers and motion-picture exporters to help them sell their products overseas to show Europe "the American way of life." Topping the list are reported payments to the Motion Picture Exporters Association of \$214,625; to *Reader's Digest*, \$112,063; to Time, Inc., \$110,987; to the *New York Herald Tribune*, \$61,000; to Pocketbooks, Inc., \$30,524. Although more than twenty other payments are also listed, the above gives a fair indication of what we are sending overseas to represent us.

SCENE, A NEW PICTORIAL MAGAZINE, already advertises itself as the only nation-wide Japanese-American magazine, with subscribers in forty-three states, Hawaii, Canada, South America, Japan, and Alaska. The July issue contains 122 pictures and news reports (58 pages in English) of Japanese-American activities. Published monthly by the Chicago Publishing Corporation, 2611 South Indiana Avenue, Chicago 16; price, \$2.00 a year.

THE RECIPIENTS OF THIS YEAR'S Pulitzer prizes were: A. B. Guthrie, Jr., *The Way West*, fiction; Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, biography; Gwendolyn Brooks, *Annie Allen*, poetry; Oliver W. Larkin, *Art and Life in America*, history. In "Garlands from Morningside Heights," The *Saturday Review of Literature* (May 13) unhappily discusses the works of the recipients and presents the results of its own annual Pulitzer Prize poll among book reviewers who made very different choices except for that of Guthrie.

IN A POLL CONDUCTED BY THE *Saturday Review of Literature* among twenty-nine leading newspaper book editors and reviewers, the critics' choice for the most notable book for the general reader among the spring publications was *Shakespeare of London*, by Marchette Chute. Winston Churchill's *The Grand Alliance* came second. In the field of fiction, John Hersey's *The Wall* came first, *The Cardinal* by Henry Morton Robinson, second.

FOUR SPRING AND SUMMER ISSUES of the *Saturday Review of Literature* which shouldn't be missed in the vacation rush are those of May 13, in which Mary Gould Fletcher edits the SRL annual guide to books for young people; the annual poetry number (May 20), which both was edited by William Rose Benét and also is a memorial to him; and the issues of April 22 and June 17, which contain respectively a helpful article by Wallace Stegner on "Fiction: A Lens on Life" and one by Arthur Mayer on "Are Movies 'Better than Ever'?" Stegner is concerned with fiction as truth, fiction that reflects experience instead of escaping from it. Mayer, in an amusing analysis of both past and present movies, audiences, and trade practices which have affected both, gives an affirmative answer to his own question and predicts that the near future will show even greater improvement, with a decided trend toward more mature subject matter.

"MENCKEN IN THE TWENTIES," BY William Manchester, appears in two instalments in the July and August *Harper's*. This is a long and lusty biographical essay which sheds considerable indirect light on the literary activities of American writers between World Wars I and II.

"ITALIAN FICTION TODAY," BY Thomas Bergin, in the summer *Yale Review* describes the present exuberant state of prose fiction in Italy, where a cultural renaissance appears to be taking place coincident with rapid material recovery. The roots of the contemporary Italian regional novel have had a hundred years' growth, stimulated originally by the influence of Sir Walter Scott, and are firmly planted in native traditional humanism. Bergin's article is especially useful because it places in proper perspective the works already widely known in this country, such as Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli* and Alvaro's *Man Is Strong*, and also indicates which of the novels under discussion are available in translation. Of these there is a larger number than one might suppose.

THE \$1,000 BOLLINGEN PRIZE IN Poetry goes this year to Wallace Stevens, "in consideration of the poet's entire work." His first book of poetry, *Harmonium*, appeared in 1924; his latest, *Transport to Summer*, in 1947. With Stevens, poetry is an avocation; he makes his living in insurance work.

The Bollingen Prize is now awarded by Yale University Library. It was established by Paul Mellon (Yale, 1929). The full committee of award is substantially the same group who last year made the award as Fellows of the Library of Congress.

A NEW SERIES OF LITERARY awards has just been instituted by the American Book Publishers Council, the American Booksellers Association, and the Book Manufacturers Institute. The gold plaque for the best novel of 1949 went to Nelson Algren for *The Man with the Golden Arm*. The poetry plaque went to Dr. William Carlos Williams for *Patterson III* and *Selected Poems*. Ralph L. Rusk's *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* received the nonfiction award.

The presentations were made before a very distinguished audience at a formal dinner in the Waldorf-Astoria, New York City, on March 16. Addresses were made by Senator Paul Douglas (Illinois), by Frederick Lewis Allen, and by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. *This I Remember*, the *Mature Mind*, and *Killers of the Dream* were among the nonfiction books receiving honorable mention.

The judges for the novel were Mary Colum, Glenway Westcott, Max Gissen, W. G. Rogers, and Malcolm Cowley; for poetry, W. H. Auden, Louise Bogan, Babette Deutsch, Horace Gregory, and Louis Untermeyer.

About Education

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF the College Conference on English in the Central Atlantic States directed its chairman, Henry Alonzo Myers, Cornell, and its secretary, Donald J. McGinn, Rutgers, to prepare a survey on what is being done in the colleges and universities of the Central Atlantic States toward a correlation of the humanities. They report, in brief, as follows:

There are 154 colleges and universities in the area, of which 125 are active members of the Conference. A questionnaire was sent to the chairman of the department of English in each of the member-institutions asking:

1. Have you established (or in prospect) inter-departmental courses in the humanities?
2. What are the new aspects (subjects, number of teachers, methods of teaching, for whom intended) of these courses?

3. Have you established (or in prospect) interdepartmental majors in the humanities?
4. Have any of your departments in the humanities united in larger divisions or groupings?
5. Would you care to comment on the value or practicability of coordination?

A total of 87 replies were received. Thirty-six institutions have interdepartmental courses; eight more have them in prospect; thirty neither have nor are planning them. Twenty-three have interdepartmental majors; eight schools have interdepartmental majors but no interdepartmental courses; sixteen have both the courses and the majors. Twenty-four schools have departments united in larger groupings, such as a Division of the Humanities.

The two most popular subjects for interdepartmental courses are Western Civilization (sometimes called "Western Culture") and World Literature (sometimes called "Comparative Literature"). The most popular interdepartmental major is American Civilization, which is offered in eleven of the twenty-three schools which have established the majors.

The number of teachers co-operating varies from the least possible, two, to an extreme of fifteen or twenty. Methods of teaching include large lecture courses, at times divided into discussion sections, the medium-sized course, and the small seminar for advanced students.

Comment on the value and practicability of co-ordination was given on the replies of seventy-one; of these, forty-two were in favor of co-ordination, some expressing unqualified approval, other judiciously weighing gains against cost; the other twenty-nine ranged from violent opposition to neutrality.

ROBERT GUNDERSON CONTRIBUTES to the February *Quarterly Journal of Speech* an article entitled "Group Dynamics—Hope or Hoax?" in which he criticizes with considerable acerbity the methods of the National Training Laboratory on Group Development at Bethel, Maine. (These were described at the CCCC last spring by Le-

land Bradford, director of the Adult Education Division, NEA.) Gunderson questions chiefly the devices of "role playing" (in which delegates act out human-relations situations), the device of the "feed-back" (the procedure through which, by using an "observer," the group can become aware of its own difficulties), and the vocabulary being developed to describe the process. He points to a need for "controlled experimentation, carefully defined terminology, and an honest recognition of limitation." A refutation of Gunderson's main objections, "Group Dynamics—More Sinned Against than Sinning," by Franklyn S. Haiman, appears in the Forum of the April *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, with a rejoinder by Gunderson.

STILL OTHER QUESTIONS ARE raised in "The Group Process as an Idea," by George H. Henry, in the April *Educational Leadership*. Henry describes the wide range of interpretation given to the operation of the group process (the ensuing result being confused objectives) and questions how effective a process can be which is not clear as to its fundamental nature. He then goes on to analyze the process as a mode of redefining democracy and as a way of creating individuality, but warns that group decision can be just one more device for the propagandist, the Fuehrer, or the reactionary, and, if educators don't see this, the group process may turn into a stronger form of indoctrination than the education-as-dogma which it revolted from.

IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "HOW Language Affects Behavior" in the April *Education*, N. Harry Camp, Jr., advocates a new guidance method based on the "science" of general semantics and discusses student difficulties and problems which can be diagnosed and treated by the classroom teacher. Some of these, for example, are: "identification," when a student behaves as if the word symbol is the person, object, or situation it represents; "allness reactions," when, in labeling a specific object, a stu-

dent neglects some of its significant characteristics and assumes that a class label defines "all" members of a class of objects; "evaluational labeling," when a personality problem results because a student has been labeled "dumb," "bad," "a nonreader," etc. He stresses that language is especially important in our schools because it is one of the most significant forms of student behavior; that psychologists recognize that the type of language activity employed by an individual distinguishes the well-adjusted person from the maladjusted; and that, once a student realizes that his faulty use of language causes some of his problems and maladjustments, he can be more easily motivated.

IN THE *ATLANTIC MONTHLY* FOR June, Gilbert E. Case, chairman of the Department of Education at Brown University, answers the controversial article by Albert Lynd, "Quackery in the Public Schools," which appeared in March. Dr. Case answers specifically the main question raised by Mr. Lynd: "Is the function of schools of education valid, and are those schools measuring up to the challenge of the modern world?" Dr. Case both makes clear the history, the problems, the weaknesses, and the achievements of schools of education and at the same time shows how wide the gap is between the university graduate schools and the private schools, on the one hand, and the needs of public education, on the other.

In the July *Atlantic*, Frank D. Ashburn, chairman of the committee studying the current achievement testing program of the College Entrance Examination Board, asks "How Do You Test a Student?" And answers that a college candidate today is tested very differently from the way his parents were. He also warns that "in aiming at our laudable goal of more education for all, we would do well to avoid falling into a soft fuzziness of making education for everybody easier at a time when what we desperately need is to make it a lot harder for those who

are able." Specifically, he fears that the present tendency to rely in college admission chiefly—wholly, he sometimes seems to think—upon tests of ability (scholastic aptitude) rather than tests of achievement will cause the high schools to teach only what is easy. He would keep the scholastic aptitude tests but re-emphasize achievement tests. Teachers of English will sympathize with Mr. Ashburn's objection to the use of objective tests only, but they will wish any essay tests to be measures of *power* rather than of knowledge.

"THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE—A Challenging Concept for You" appears in *School Life* for June. In it Homer Kempfer and William R. Wood define a community college as "*a composite of educational opportunities extended by the local public-school system free to all persons who, having passed the normal age for completing the twelfth grade, need or want to continue their education.*"

Such an institution will offer high-school graduates either preparation for the upper divisions of four-year colleges or a terminal education, including much vocational training appropriate to their community. To those beyond eighteen who did not complete the high-school work it will offer either part-time or full-time study with guidance service as long as needed. The community college will be particularly useful in dealing with young adults out of work.

The authorship of this article makes it apparent that the United States Office of Education is encouraging the development of local junior colleges as part of the public school system.

"TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS INTERESTED in receiving free bibliographies and other materials on the use of American folklore in the schools should write Dr. Elizabeth Pilant, executive secretary, National Conference on American Folklore for Youth, Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana.

New Books

Teaching Materials

MODERN RHETORIC WITH READINGS.

By CLEANTH BROOKS and ROBERT PENN WARREN. Harcourt, Brace, 1949. Pp. 928. \$3.50.

UNDERSTANDING AND USING ENGLISH.

By NEWMAN B. BIRK and GENEVIEVE B. BIRK. Odyssey Press, 1949. Pp. 459. \$3.00.

The continuing crisis—or confusion—in the teaching of freshman English is strikingly displayed by these two notable texts of last season. Somewhat defensively, the authors of *Modern Rhetoric* affirm that their book “makes no pretension to being newfangled or modish.” On this point, the authors of *Understanding and Using English* make no deposition, but their grateful acknowledgments to Richards, Hayakawa, Fries, and other students of modern usage hint at a more hospitable attitude toward the new. The difference between the texts is real enough, but it does not turn on modishness.

Ever since word got out that *Modern Rhetoric* was in the making, teachers of composition have felt a more than ordinary interest in the project. Each of the authors was a commanding figure: Cleanth Brooks as one of the lawgivers of the New Criticism and Robert Penn Warren as a Pulitzer Prize novelist. Nothing commonplace could issue from such a collaboration. And, whatever else it may be, *Modern Rhetoric* is not commonplace. In its wholesomely reactionary way, it is as challenging a book as the same pair's *Understanding Poetry* of a dozen years ago.

The book is frankly and specifically a rhetoric; it takes for granted the student's knowledge of grammar and sentence structure. By implication it also assumes maturity and perseverance, for these qualities are needed as one becomes enmeshed in the web of distinctions which is spun in the opening sections. Once these are past, the book provides an admirably organized analysis of the four kinds of discourse, each stage of the analysis well buttressed by illustrations, “Applications,” and exercises.

The chapter on exposition draws heavily

upon formal logic for the usable tools of clear thinking: the tools of classification, division, and causal analysis. The chapter on argument adds induction, deduction, identification of fallacies, syllogisms, and so on. Similarly, the authors isolate the components of description and narration, always with a keen eye for structural pattern and texture. From the larger questions of rhetorical strategy, they then turn to the tactics of the paragraph and the sentence. The final section shows the synthesizing function of style, working through the rich and complex resources of diction, metaphor, tone, and rhythm.

The bound-in book of readings contains thirty-seven articles and excerpts from longer works, readings drawn principally from twentieth-century and contemporary writing. Effective contrasts are made by setting alongside Froude's moving account of the execution of Mary Queen of Scots James Melville's surgical exposure of Froude's rhetoric. Equally good is the juxtaposition of a selection from Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* and one from Robert Graves's *It Was a Stable World*.

As a guide to the technical principles of elementary rhetoric and elementary logic, the book has very real merit, and it should give to a course in composition a coherence and intellectual rigor that is often lacking. But it is clearly not a text that will teach itself. In all fairness it ought to be used with the same close application that is commonly reserved for laboratory handbooks in science, which it somewhat resembles in its systematic methods. To the better-than-average student, especially in the second semester of the freshman course, or to the student in a sophomore composition course it offers a rational program for attaining a good prose style.

Understanding and Using English is designed on much more modest lines. It is obviously written by practicing freshman English teachers for the mass freshman of 1950. It approaches the writing process from the point of view of modern linguistics and semantics and directs its primary attention to the immediate writing needs of the student. Even an inexperienced instructor may

be trusted with this text, for the authors seem to have had him in mind as well as the ill-prepared student. Of course, the way for this excellent text has been paved by a book like Perrin's *Writer's Guide and Index to English*; but teachers who have found that too difficult for mine-run freshmen should welcome this simply written and highly functional text.

Unlike Brooks and Warren, Birk and Birk attempt no philosophical unification of their materials. The first seven chapters, it is true, form a reasonably coherent unit of study, moving from general questions of language and meaning to such specific matters as grammar, levels of usage, and methods of making the sentence and the paragraph rhetorically effective. In the seventh chapter all these elements are shown "in action" in Stuart Chase's very apposite essay, "The Luxury of Integrity," in effect a moving plea to the young writer to be morally responsible, the integration being made by marginal comments and questions. The remaining chapters are largely independent units, which provide practical guidance for writing informal themes, research papers, and examinations; for improving reading skill; and for developing the vocabulary.

If this book is much more realistically adjusted to the everyday needs of freshman English classes and to the inexorable limitations of time and, to that extent, more likely to achieve its humbler aim than is *Modern Rhetoric*, it illustrates at the same time the almost intolerable burden which the freshman English course is being made to carry. If the freshman course is to introduce the student to the nature of language, train him in analytical reading of literary and nonliterary materials, build up his vocabulary, mend his spelling, improve his speech, speed up his reading, make him a clear thinker and, finally, a socially conscious writer, it must content itself with a lick and a promise.

Each of these texts tries in its way to face up to the problem. Brooks and Warren cut the knot by limiting themselves to rhetoric and the rudiments of logic and rejecting the usual service demands. Birk and Birk do not quarrel with their burden but concentrate on what seems immediately possible. For the upper half or third of one's students, *Understanding and Using English* must soon seem too elementary, lacking as it does any extended treatment of the rhetorical problems which give such rich substance to *Modern Rhetoric*. For the lower half or two-thirds, on the other hand, the latter text is likely

to remain esoteric doctrine. The solution would seem to be to separate the strong students from the weak, the linguistically mature from the immature, and give to each group the textbook fitted to its capacities.

ERNEST SAMUELS

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

MODERN RHETORIC WITH READINGS.

By CLEANTH BROOKS and ROBERT PENN WARREN. Harcourt, Brace. Pp. xx+928+xii. \$3.50.

The publication of a new rhetoric is justified by "... the study of linguistic behavior which has been carried on during the last twenty-five years. . .," a study which "... ought to yield something of significance to the teaching of English composition." So say the authors of the new *Modern Rhetoric* in their Preface.

And they do make reference to linguistic behavior: "Varying connotations in words with the same denotation may be illustrated from words which refer to concrete objects. Compare the simple words *bucket* and *pail*. The denotations are much the same. We might apply either word to name one and the same vessel. But in present-day America, at least, *bucket* is more likely to be the ordinary word, with associations of everyday activity, whereas *pail* will seem a little more old-fashioned and endowed with more 'poetic' suggestions." Professor Kurath, however, finds that for the eastern United States, at least, "... *pail* is the regular name throughout the North. . . ." On the other hand, "... all the Midland and South use *bucket* in this sense. . . ." Brooks and Warren have evidently relied on their observation of the linguistic behavior of their own region rather than on the results of recent linguistic research.

"The etymology . . . of a word is often highly interesting in itself, but knowledge of word origins is also of great practical usefulness. The full mastery of a particular word frequently entails knowing its root meaning. Possessing that meaning, we acquire a firm grasp on its later meanings, for we can see them as extended and specialized meanings that have grown out of the original meaning." Yet in 1867 William Dwight

¹ P. 372.

² Hans Kurath, *A Word Geography of the Eastern United States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1949), p. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴ Brooks and Warren, p. 381.

Whitney, America's first internationally famous linguistic scholar, wrote: "But etymological reminiscences, while thus of the highest value to him who reflects upon language and examines its history, are, as regards the practical purposes of speech, of very subordinate consequence; nay, they would, if more prominent before our attention, be an actual embarrassment to us. . . . All significant transfer, growth of new meanings, form-making, is directly dependent upon our readiness to forget the derivation of our terms, to cut loose from historical connections, and to make the tie of conventional usage the sole one between the thing signified and its spoken sign."² The principle set forth by Whitney has, of course, become an axiom of modern linguistics.

Other examples could be cited from the *Modern Rhetoric* to demonstrate that Brooks and Warren do not have much acquaintance with the results of linguistic research during the last twenty-five years—or the past century.

Their restatement of the four kinds of discourse is, on the other hand, excellent, and the readings (about 340 pp.) are well chosen to illustrate the rhetorical categories. Nevertheless, the irresponsibility of the authors in matters linguistic undermines the reader's confidence in the entire book. And, though the book is, in general, well written, it is perhaps not unfair to suggest that, at least in the passages quoted above, Whitney writes rather better than do Brooks and Warren.

KARL W. DYKEMA

YOUNGSTOWN COLLEGE

YOUR ENGLISH HELPER. By ARNOLD LESLIE LAZARUS. Globe. Paper, 8½" × 11". Pp. 160. \$2.00.

A new idea in schoolbooks: a rather miscellaneous individual reference book, with helps for reading, writing, and speech. Conservative in its usage and rhetoric items.

THE NEW MODERN AMERICAN & BRITISH POETRY. Edited by LOUIS UNTERMEYER. Harcourt. Pp. lvii+422. \$1.88.

In the present revision of this popular text, thirteen poets have been added—e.g., W. C. Williams, Shapiro, Viereck, Jarrell, G. M. Hopkins, Auden, Dylan Thomas—and the repre-

² William Dwight Whitney, *Language and the Study of Language* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1867), p. 132.

sentation of some major poets increased. There is a new forty-page Introduction, and introductions to individuals have been revised. The chronological arrangement, from Whitman to Viereck and from Hardy to Norman Nicholson, is retained. Some strange exclusions and inclusions, but a useful volume.

EVERYDAY SPEECH: HOW TO SAY WHAT YOU MEAN. By BESS SONDEL. Permabook. 16mo. Pp. 189. \$0.35.

Sensible advice about private and public speaking addressed to adults in quite freely colloquial language. Might be very useful with carefully selected individuals in upper secondary or lower college years, as well as for the too-many inhibited teachers. Little about voice or other mechanics. Each left-hand page is devoted to a cartoon.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. By JANE AUSTEN. Dutton. \$1.25.

This is one of the first issues in the "New American Edition, Everyman's Library." The books are larger than the regular "Everyman's" series, with good paper, very satisfactory ten-point type, and stiff covers, attractively designed.

A LEARNER'S DICTIONARY OF CURRENT ENGLISH. By A. S. HORNBV, E. V. GATENBY, and H. WAKEFIELD. Oxford. Pp. 1,527. \$4.25.

Especially compiled to meet the needs of foreign students of English with particular emphasis on information concerning idioms and syntax. Words included are those the foreign student is likely to meet in his studies up to the time he enters a university. Definitions made as simple as possible. Pronunciation shown by means of the International Phonetic Alphabet. 1,406 illustrations. Offset from the original edition, which was published by the Institute for Research in English Teaching, Tokyo, 1942.

FOUNDATIONS OF ENGLISH FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS. By HUGH WALPOLE. University of Chicago Press. Paper. Pp. 59. \$1.00. (Offset.)

A manual for the use of adults well educated in another language. Based upon the author's work with such students in International House, University of Chicago.

HOW TO SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS. By ROBERT H. SEASHORE and A. C. VAN DUSEN. "Life Adjustment Booklets." Science Research Associates. Pp. 48. \$0.60.

The problems of fifteen thousand typical young people are listed, and six steps to be

taken in the solution of any serious problem are explained and illustrated.

WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT. By JAMES C. WORTHY. "Life Adjustment Booklets." Science Research Associates. Pp. 48. \$0.60.

Revised Editions

ART AND SOCIETY. By HERBERT READ. Pantheon Books. Pp. 152. \$3.50.

A thoroughly revised and enlarged edition of a work which has become accepted as the standard introduction to the sociology of art.

THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF DRYDEN. Edited by GEORGE R. NOYES. 2d ed. Houghton Mifflin. Pp. 1095. \$5.00.

Since the first edition appeared in 1909, Dryden's works have been the subject of prodigious study by many scholars. In this new edition, Professor Noyes takes account of these investigations, particularly in his notes and in his expanded biographical sketch of Dryden.

ANABASIS: A POEM BY ST. JOHN PERSE. Translated by T. S. ELIOT. Harcourt, Brace. Pp. 109. \$4.00.

A poem well known in Europe, first translated from the French some twenty years ago by Mr. Eliot, now given by him a more exact rendering.

UNDERSTANDING POETRY: AN ANTHOLOGY FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS. By CLEANTH BROOKS and ROBERT PENN WARREN. Holt. Pp. 727. Cloth, \$3.20; paper, \$2.60.

Considerably enlarged and revised from the edition of 1938. The focus of study is still the poem, but it is also viewed in relation to its historical situation and to the main body of the poet's work. The critical discussions have been extended, particularly the material related to the creative process. The poems have been rearranged and considerably increased in number and the exercises completely reworked.

THE CENTURY COLLEGIATE HANDBOOK. By GARLAND GREEVER, EASLEY S.

JONES, and AGNES LAW JONES. 3d ed. Appleton-Century-Crofts. Pp. 460. \$2.00.

The general plan of this edition is similar to its predecessors, but within each section the order of presentation has been changed, much fresh illustrative material supplied, and the structure tightened to facilitate reference. The exercises throughout are new, and there are several innovations in aids to the student.

ASSIGNMENTS IN EXPOSITION. By LOUISE E. RORABACHER. 2d ed. Harper. Pp. 484.

Still designed for the *average* college student. Principal change the inclusion of a fourth section, "Further Readings," containing a score of additional essays, which turns this new edition into a combined rhetoric and book of readings.

PROBLEMS IN PROSE. By PAUL HAINES. 3d ed. Harper. Pp. 405. \$2.25.

Provides materials for the directed study of expository writing, with comments and questions designed to make the student see how the writer went about organizing and presenting his material.

BUSINESS LETTERS. By WALTER KAY SMART and LOUIS WILLIAM MCKELVEY. 3d ed. Harper. Pp. 535.

Considerably revised from the edition of 1941, with new problems and exercises, and a paper-back supplement for teachers, entitled "Shop Talk," which gives suggestions for teaching.

ENGLISH FUNDAMENTALS: FORM A. By DON W. EMERY and JOHN M. KIERZEK. 3d ed. Macmillan. Pp. 240. \$1.60. Paper.

Rewritten from cover to cover, with new exercises and progress tests.

A TREASURY OF THE THEATRE. Edited by JOHN GASSNER. Rev. ed. for colleges. Simon & Schuster. Pp. 1120. \$5.50.

Changed extensively from the "Ibsen to Odets" edition of 1940. Number of plays and their range increased, so that this single volume may serve as a core textbook. Editorial introductions enlarged, particularly in relation to modern drama. Full text of thirty-nine plays from Ibsen to Miller.

BRITISH POETRY AND PROSE. Edited by PAUL ROBERT LIEDER, ROBERT MORSS LOVETT, and ROBERT KILBURN ROOT. Vol. I: *Beowulf to Blake*; Vol. II: *Wordsworth to Spender*. 3d ed. Houghton Mifflin I, pp. 1066; II, pp. 1057. Each \$4.50. Illustrated.

Introductions: rewritten and expanded, material changed somewhat, but major difference from earlier editions is the chronological extension to include generous selections from the major poets and prose writers of the first half of the twentieth century.

A QUARTO OF MODERN LITERATURE. Edited by LEONARD BROWN and PORTER G. PERRIN. 3d ed. Scribner's. Pp. 631. \$4.50.

Provides materials for a course in literature based chiefly on British and American writings of the recent past. Revised to increase range of

representation (the poetry section, in particular, is much enlarged) and to freshen materials of earlier editions. Works selected to provoke discussion in dormitories as well as in classrooms.

MODERN ENGLISH READINGS. Edited by ROGER SHERMAN LOOMIS and DONALD LEMEN CLARK. 6th ed. Rinehart. Pp. 1060. \$3.50.

Biography, short stories, poems, essays, and plays, selections of which are somewhat changed from earlier editions to make room for new material, which includes a study of Hardy's novels by Lord David Cecil, an analysis of Stevenson's manuscript revisions of *Kidnapped*, contemporary reviews of O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*, and an analysis of Olivier's film production of *Hamlet*.

ERRATA

HERITAGE OF EUROPEAN LITERATURE. Edited by EDWARD H. WEATHERLY, A. P. WAGNER, EDWIN H. ZEYDEL, and AVRAHAM YARMOLINSKY. Ginn. Pp. 775. \$5.00.

The editors regret that in the long review of this volume in the January *College English* the names of the editors and publishers got eclipsed in the process of makeup.

Nonfiction

THE COUNTER-RENAISSANCE. By HERMAN HAYDN. Scribner's. Pp. 705. \$7.50.

This certainly is an important book, particularly for those who would read perceptively the literature of the period between the crowning of Petrarch with the laurel at Rome in 1341 and the death of Bacon in 1626. Mr. Haydn describes the three distinct intellectual movements discernible during this time: the classical Renaissance or the humanistic revival; the second, which he calls the "Counter-Renaissance," since it originated as a protest against the basic principles of the classical Renaissance, as well as against those of medieval Scholasticism; and the third, led by Galileo and Kepler, which he calls the "Scientific Reformation." He describes their impact upon Elizabethan literature and thought. As a comprehensive study of the intellectual history of the Renaissance, this volume

will be a standard reference book for some time to come, but the chapter on Shakespeare and the Counter-Renaissance with its analysis of Honor versus Stoicism in *Hamlet* and Nature versus Stoicism in *Lear* will particularly interest teachers of English.

SCIENCE AND ENGLISH POETRY. By DOUGLAS BUSH. Oxford. Pp. 166. \$3.50.

Professor Bush here sketches the repercussions of science upon English poetry from the Elizabethan age to the present in his usual felicitous style, characterized by humor and grace as well as by sound scholarship. The six chapters were originally given as the Patten Lectures at Indiana University in 1949. They deal with "The Elizabethans: The Medieval Heritage"; "The New Science and the Seventeenth-Century Poets"; "Newtonianism, Ration-

alism, and Sentimentalism"; "The Romantic Revolt against Rationalism"; "Evolution and the Victorian Poets"; "Modern Science and Modern Poetry."

THE AMERICAN WRITER AND THE EUROPEAN TRADITION. Edited by MARGARET DENNY and WILLIAM H. GILMAN. University of Minnesota Press. \$2.75.

A series of essays by twelve scholars. Originally delivered as lectures. In the editors' Foreword are questions of genuine interest to thoughtful readers. The essays fall into three groups or themes. What was the American writer's original heritage of European ideas? What ideas, moods, or manners in American writers were indigenous, or mostly so, to America? What has been the influence of American letters abroad? Significant viewpoints.

THE SHAPING SPIRIT: A STUDY OF WALLACE STEVENS. By WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR. Regnery. \$2.75.

"To read Stevens with enjoyment and understanding," says Mr. O'Connor, "it is necessary to perceive that each subject, however commonplace or esoteric, becomes a variation upon the all-controlling theme: the role of the human imagination." He considers the relationship of imagination and reality the dominant theme in Stevens' poetry.

COLLECTED IMPRESSIONS. By ELIZABETH BOWEN. Knopf. \$3.50.

A collection of Miss Bowen's own favorites. Critical reviews, prefaces, informal essays, and descriptive pieces. She discusses Virginia Woolf, Fanny Burney, Mark Van Doren, Aldous Huxley, Anthony Trollope, Flaubert, and others. There are essays on Irish life and notes on writing a novel. Written during the 1930's and later. As always, her writing has distinction.

THE LIFE OF POETRY. By MURIEL RUKEYSER. Current Books, Inc. \$3.00.

Four chapters: "The Resistances," "Background and Sources," "Uses of Poetry," and "Life of Poetry." As a poet and poetry-lover, the author makes a plea for "the communication of feeling" and "enlightened enjoyment" in the writing and reading of poetry.

CHAUCER AND THE CANTERBURY TALES. By WILLIAM WITHERLE LAWRENCE. Columbia University Press. Pp. 184. \$2.50.

Professor Lawrence is a scholar and teacher who loves Chaucer and wants his readers to. His method, therefore, is to set his sights on the *Canterbury Tales* as living literature, to stress the structure and design of the poem as a whole, and to subordinate the apparatus of scholarship. The result is a book which is both sound and yet easy for the general reader to follow, but, since it embodies considerable research material not hitherto printed, it will also interest the specialist.

THE POET WORDSWORTH. By HELEN DARBISHIRE. (Clark Lectures, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1949.) Oxford University Press. Pp. 182.

A critical study of the poems written by Wordsworth between 1798 and 1808—the *Lyrical Ballads* and *Poems of 1807* and *The Prelude*—the work upon which, Miss Darbishire believes, his claim to the title of great poet rests.

THE ART OF T. S. ELIOT. By HELEN GARDNER. Dutton. Pp. 185. \$3.00.

The outgrowth of a series of Oxford University lectures. Miss Gardner discusses chiefly the later works, taking up where F. O. Matthiessen left off in *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot*. Close reading of the poetry, fortified by reference to Eliot's own critical writing.

WHITE WITCH DOCTOR. By LOUISE A. STINETORF. Westminster. \$3.00.

Written by a missionary in the first person, though these are not, in a sense, her own experiences. A story of a medical missionary's twenty-five years in the Congo. It is a fresh, moving story with amusing, hair-raising, sympathetic jungle episodes and experiences. However, the missionary's own trials and accomplishments are overstressed. The reader would welcome more information about the people. Good. August Literary Guild selection.

ELEPHANT BILL. By LT. COL. J. H. WILLIAMS. Doubleday. \$3.00.

The author worked with elephants in Burma for twenty-two years. This is an account of how they were used in World War II, for work

that men and machines could not do. Photographs and end-maps. Portions ran in the *New Yorker*. Very entertaining, instructive.

INTERVIEW WITH INDIA. By JOHN FREDERICK NUEHL. John Day. \$3.00.

A fascinating, timely book about a country much in our minds. A view of the people from all walks of life.

A CENTURY OF IRON AND MEN. By HARLAN HATCHER. Bobbs-Merrill. \$3.50.

Fourth volume in a series relating and picturing the drama of the development of the Northwest: The Great Lakes, Lake Erie, Western Reserve. Just one hundred years ago an ore expert discovered in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan a mountain of magnetic ore. This is a magnificent pageant of the development of the region—a story of a nation and an era. Maps and illustrations. Absorbing Americana.

A TEXAS COWBOY. By CHARLES A. SIRINGO. Introduction by J. FRANK DOBIE. Illustrations by TOM LEA. Sloan. \$3.00.

The first cowboy to publish an authentic autobiography. Various editions and a huge sale in his day. The edition published in 1885 is here reissued. In line with the interest in dime hunts. The Old West lives again.

THE LIFE OF SCIENCE: ESSAYS IN THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION. By GEORGE SARTON. Schuman. \$3.50.

Essays written during a period of thirty years. They explain the purpose, scope, and methods of the history of science in terms easy to grasp. The guiding principle is the idea that "science can rightly be called 'the domain of reason.'"

ON BEING HUMAN. By ASHLEY MONTAGU. Schuman. \$1.95.

"Co-operation, not conflict, is the natural law of life." The greatest problem confronting the modern mind, says Dr. Montagu, is the problem of human relations—man's relations to his fellows and to himself. He attacks the theory that war is natural, competition necessary. Clear, definite, thought-provoking. Easy to read and comprehend.

BE YOUR REAL SELF. By Dr. DAVID HAROLD FINK. Schuster. \$2.95.

Dr. Fink, author of *Release from Nervous Tension*, is a practicing neuropsychiatrist. He stresses the physical and mental effects of the pressures under which we live today and advises *relaxation* to release tension. He writes in an easy, simple manner, with case histories. Good advice; *relaxing* to read.

HOW TO LIVE WITH YOUR NERVES. By DR. WALTER ALVAREZ. Wilcox, Follett. Paper. \$0.50.

The effect of high-tension living upon modern lives. How to direct this energy toward creative good. Thirty-two pages. Wise and helpful advice.

RADIO, TELEVISION, AND SOCIETY. By CHARLES A. SIEPMANN. Oxford. \$4.75.

Professor Siepmann deals chiefly with the social effect of these mass media, though he assumes that aesthetically better programs are more desirable. He presents all the facts concerning the advertisers' control of programs and the difficulties of changing this, without telling the reader what conclusion to reach. Information and open-minded discussion, not propaganda.

CLAREMONT COLLEGE READING CONFERENCE, FIFTEENTH YEARBOOK. Claremont College Curriculum Laboratory. Paper. Pp. 146.

In the eleven major papers here presented, the conference theme, "Developing Personal and Group Relationships through Reading," is followed more closely than convention themes usually are.

GUIDE TO LIFE AND LITERATURE OF THE SOUTHWEST. By J. FRANK DOBIE. Southern Methodist University Press. Paper. Pp. 111. \$1.50.

Note the word "life," given preference in the title. An unconventionally arranged bibliography, with unconventional, personal introductions to the sections. Strong on characters and customs, weak on politics and business. Reissue.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD. Edited by C. B. TINKER and H. F. LOWRY. "Oxford Standard Editions." Oxford. Pp. xxxii+509. \$2.50.

The distinguished editors have used the text and order of the last edition edited by Arnold.

They have added a few poems not in that edition and Arnold's prefaces of 1853 and 1854. The print is not large, but it is clear and well leaded, and the binding is excellent.

A HISTORY OF GREEK LITERATURE.

By MOSES HADAS. Columbia University Press. Pp. 327. \$4.25.

In this volume Professor Hadas covers the entire literature of the ancient Greeks—from its beginnings to the fifth century A.D., from Homer to Lucian. To make the book both useful and inclusive, he treats some of the lesser-known writers more fully than those concerning whom much has already been written, and for the nonspecialist reader he includes brief outlines of certain of the longer works. Bibliographical notes for each chapter are appended. An excellent reference book for the English teacher's library.

I SELL WHAT I WRITE. By JULES ARCHER.

Frederick Fell. Pp. 220. \$2.50.

A successful free-lance magazine writer gives counsel to the would-be writer by describing case histories of one hundred of his own works, both fiction and nonfiction, including their conception, execution, and selling, as well as a variety of other laboratory details.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR PERSONALITY BY READING. By FRANCIS BEAUCHESNE THORNTON. Bruce. Pp. 241. \$2.50.

A lively book by a buoyant author who firmly believes that "reading is a form of living" and who enthusiastically evangelizes upon the delights of literacy. Each chapter contains a popular discussion of a type of writing he thinks may stimulate the timid person, and forty pages of Appendix provide a useful reading list.

DISCUSSION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS. By

JAMES H. MCBURNEY and KENNETH G. HANCE. Harper. Pp. 432. \$3.00.

A completely reorganized and revised edition of *Principles and Methods of Discussion*, a pioneer text and orderly analysis of the discussion process.

MAINE DOINGS. By ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN. Bobbs-Merrill. \$3.00.

Handsome, effective pen drawings and endpapers by the author. The poet has written these short prose selections in love of Maine, of

family, and of humanity. Few books show a greater trust and admiration of a son for a father. The first story, "The Jenny Lind Dollar," is a treasure. The Quinnam sisters—soft Annie, hard Zenobia—are tantalizing pictures of feminine nature. As for the cookery, the flavor is magical. A delightful book to read, to own, and to share.

A DEGREE OF PRUDERY: A BIOGRAPHY OF FANNY BURNEY. By EMILY HAHN. Doubleday. \$3.50.

Fanny Burney's *Evalina* was a best-seller in eighteenth-century England. Emily Hahn writes very cleverly of Fanny, her father, her life at Court, and her endless diary and letters. The real charm of the book lies in the satire and humor with which the author pictures the England of that period.

THE WORLD OF FICTION. By BERNARD DE VOTO. Houghton. \$3.50.

Editorials published in the *Saturday Review of Literature* and articles from *Harper's* have been expanded in this volume. In the Preface De Voto states, "This book has a single, deliberately limited, and clearly defined purpose. It is not a treatise on the psychology of fiction nor a handbook on the writing of fiction. . . . I ask the reader to regard it solely as an analysis of the relationship between the person who writes a novel and the person who reads it." He has, he believes, presented a valid and useful way of looking at novels, said things so obvious that he "thought it was time for someone to say them."

THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL NOVEL.

By ERNEST E. LEISY. University of Oklahoma Press. \$3.75.

"This book has been written for the intelligent lay reader who is interested in the nation's past and who wants a rather full account of the material and methods of American historical fiction." Arranged by historical periods—"Colonial America," "The American Revolution and Aftermath," "Western Movement," "Civil War and Reconstruction," "National Expansion." Each novel is analyzed, evaluated, and related to others in the same category.

AUTUMN LEAVES. By ANDRÉ GIDE. Philosophical Library. \$3.75.

Reminiscences, moral and political beliefs, friendship, family relationships—in short, a personal autobiography. Two imaginary interviews

express Gide's ideas about God, religion, and church.

WRITING, ADVICE AND DEVICES. By WALTER S. CAMPBELL. Doubleday. \$3.50.

The successful theories and techniques which the author (Stanley Vestal) has used in his classes at the University of Oklahoma, with examples and analyses of various devices and advice on the practice of writing.

WRITING YOUR POEM: A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO VERSE WRITING. By LAWRENCE JOHN ZILLMAN. Funk & Wagnalls. \$2.75.

"An analysis of poetry in the process of being written by those who, like readers for whom the book is intended, are learning to master the tools of their art."

LEAVE YOUR LANGUAGE ALONE. By ROBERT A. HALL, JR. Ithaca, N.Y.: Linguistica. Pp. 254. \$3.00.

Addressed to laymen and with a fighting title, this scholarly book may easily be misjudged. Its exposition is simple, with a minimum of technical vocabulary (and technical terms explained), but it supplies for the interested person untrained in linguistics sufficient evidence for a decision to follow the liberals or to stay with the conservative prescriptive grammarians. The chapters on analyzing language by studying its forms are perhaps the best published explanation of this modern approach. Even the mysterious "phoneme" is made clear.

THE BALLAD TREE. By EVELYN KENDRICK WELLS. Ronald Press. Pp. 370. \$4.50.

This volume is essentially a clear, fascinating history of the English and American ballad. Miss Wells has swung a keen scythe through multiple and complex historical details, and those which she has spared illumine the text instead of confusing the reader. The teacher and student will find it a scholarly but ebullient study of the ballads, their folklore, verse, and music. The general reader will like especially the presentation of the texts and tunes as sung traditionally in the last fifty years in England and America. Well illustrated.

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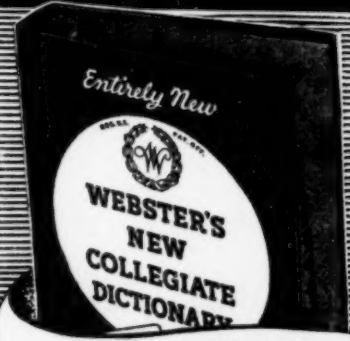
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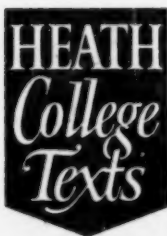
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